eathe Clarch of S

A Treatile concerning

Concerning Scandal in the general.

Concerning Public Scandals, or Scandals as they are the object of Church-centures, and more particularly as they are in practice. Concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or foundations errors

Concerning Scandalius Divitions. ons, very shortly and facisfyingly discussed and cleared.

that fingularly faithful and wife servant of Chins Christ,

. late Minister of the Golpel in Glaleon.

Who being dead (by this) yet theaketh:

nd published by John Carfteres, one of the Minist in GLASGO W

o which is prefixed an excellent PREFACE of an Mr. Blair, Minister of the Gospel at St. Andrews, who in he also vigoroully driveth the main design of the blessed Authorin this last Piece of his Labours)

ogether with a/TABLE of the CONTENTS of the Several Chapters of each part.

atth. 18. / 7. We mite the world because of Offences: ust needs be that Officers come: but we to that man b the Offence cometh.

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The Preface.



He rife of the subsequent Treatife, the blessed Authour, in the very first words thereof, declareth to be the occasion he had from, Rivel. 2. on the Episile to the Church of Pergames, to meditate on the nature and forts of Scandal. And before I fay any thing of this present work. I shall

hence take occasion, to shew my thoughts of his Commentary on the Book of Revelation. In my humble opinion, that which was spoken of the vertuous woman, Prov. 30. v. 29. may well be applied to the pains this Author bath raken on that Book : Many Writers have done worthily, but thou excellest them all. The reason of my so high estimation thereof, is taken from a threefold excellencie I find therein. The first is , a brief, clear and accurate opening of the most difficult Texr in the whole Bible , applying with great fagacity and admirable dexterity, dark Prophecies to their hillocrical events: and yet with judicious fobriery, not refiraining, as it were to fingle flars of feveral persons. that which rather relateth to conglobate confiellations of gents or patients: together with a modeft, yet a diligent Search of those things which are not yet accomplished. Whoever would compendiously have an experiment hereof let him read the first Lecture on Chap. 6. (which parcel. with fome others, were fent to me by the Author, fome moneths before the printing) And as herein I did find great fatisfaction, by reason of the clearness, and notable coherence of the Interpretation, and convincing grounds and arguments proving the folidity thereof, So may thou, Christian Reader be fweetly refreshed and strongly confirmed thereby. fecond excellencie hereof, is the great plenty of pract Divinity, relating to all Christians, but more especial Ministers of the Gospel. I cannot name any Authors w wherein I have perceived to many edifying overtures, many fearching discouries and encouraging helps as this Co mentary abounds with. From the first Letture on Chap.3. the carefull Christian and the well-gitted diligent Free

may be first allarmed, and then well strengthened, by that searching discourse on these words, Thou has a name that thou livest, but are dead. The shird excellency of this work, lieth not only in clearing and answering many doubts very sussingly, but also in discussing more largely, by way of digression, many weighty and important Truths, even to the number of twenty five: So that this Commentary, besides profitable opening of such a Text, and handling much practical Divinity, cleareth with great modesty, without any personal reslections, and discusseth edifyingly as much darkened Truth, as if the whole work had been written to dispute and determine pertinent and important questions.

But now, to say no more of that Work, which speaketh for it self, being in the hands of many, and I wish it be diligently perused with a bleffing from heaven: I come to say

fomething of this Treatile of Scandal.

And well was he fitted to write of this subject, whose exercise it was, to have alwayes a coascience void of offence toward God and toward men: and very successfull was he in walking this way; for, in a time wherein scandals of all forts did abound exceedingly, sew there were (if any at all) who did stumble at his way, or he at the way of others, endeavouring still and by all means winning and edifying. And whoever knew his way of walking, they will read the same in this Treatise, set forth to others.

In the first part thereof thou wilt find, Christian Reader, the nature of Scandal dexterously opened, with the several forts of it, and the variety of wayes whereby it is both given and taken, with considerable grounds to make Christians loath and wary, both as to the giving of offence and taking. And withall, many intricate cases are cleared, as namely, what is to be done when the matter is lawful, and and the offence doubtful: Also what ought to be our carriage, when there is a real difference between parties upon the account of a civil interest: Also what behaviour is requisit when the command of Superiours and the elchewing of offence are in opposition: Also that very important case, is accurately dehated and wisely determined, what is to be done when offence is like to follow on either side. And finally

what course both private Christians and Pastors aught to hold when scandals and offences abound. The answer to which alone, holdeth forth a very excellent directory for

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The second part treateth of Scandal as it is publick, and falleth under Ecclefiaftick censure, wherein there are many excellent overtures for the wife and right exercise of Church discipline. Among many, this is confiderable, That the faving grace of repentance, is not to be enquired into, as the alone ground upon which Church officers are to reft for removing an offence: but that a fober, ferious acknowledgment of the offence, with the expression of an unfeignedlike purpole to walk inoffensively is sufficient. This is very accurately debated, and folidly and foundly determined. There is also, Chap. 12. a clear discussing of that tickle Question, What ought to be done by private persons when Church-officers spare such as are scandalous, to wit, upon Supposition that there is a real defect (in the truth whereof often there is a mistake) yet private professors are to continue in the discharge of the duties of their stations, and not to separate from the Communion of the Cherch, but to count themselves exonered in holding fast their own integrity, mourning for offences, representing the same to Church-officers, and, if need be, to superiour Judicatories. All this is ftrongly, convincingly, and very facisfyingly proven by Scripture.

The third part is concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or Scandalous Errours, a Theme very necessary for these recling times It I should offer to pick out thence points very remarkable. I would far passe the just bounds of a Presace. Wherefore, I shal only thereof say this, That both Christian Magistrates, Ministers and People, will find their duty laid before them, no lesse folidly than accuratly, what to do in the case of spreading errour. And, O that the Most High would strike in with his soveraign Authority upon the hearts, and consciences of all sorts, especially Magistrates, in whose hands

this Tractate shall come!

But now I come to speak a word of the sorth part of this Treatise, and that so much the more, I, Because it was the last labour of this precious man of God, and so it is his super-like song. The Only Wise thought it has a recommend to

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all His People, especially within this Land, in these distracted times (when passion and prejudice makes it most dissinctly, if not altogether impossible to speak a word in season acceptably) the hatefulness of scandalous division and the loveliness of a godly union by the words of a Messenger, who was one of a thousand, known to be moderat, wise and faithful, very far from factiousness, sharply perceiving what was duty, every impartially uttering the same. At the dictating of this Part, the infirmity of the decaying tabernacle was so great, that he could not endure the labour of writing with his own hand, But being now ripe for glory, and having entered the suburbs of Heaven, he breathed our his wife and godly thoughts to a borrowed pen.

Next, I have the greater reason to consider diligently this piece of the work; and having considered it, so recommend it the more earnestly to all Christs People, and especially to my reverend and dear Brethren of the Ministery, because it was sent to me sealed from the Author, in the beginning of his last stekness, as a Depositum committed to me to make it ready for publishing; which I performed carefully and faithfully, without the alteration of one material word; and having lately perused the Copie the Printer makes use of, I hereby testifie it is the same for matter, order, sentences, and words, the Author sent to me and I transmitted to him a little

before the Lord removed him.

And now, upon the matter, I think verily that this healing Tractate is so full of that wisdom; which is from above, first pure, and then peaceable, that it will speak plainly the Auther fitted of God to bring forth a scasonable word. At the first reading thereof, my spirit was greatly refreshed, and my heart enlarged to bleffe the Lord, conceiving that the Prince of peace, in compassion over our purrished fores, had provided this mollifying ownement and cleanfing plaister, in order to a cure of the same, And I doubt nothing but every true-hearted lover of Sions peace, who longs to fee the Lord exalted, in binding-up our hither till incurable wounds, will magnifie the Lord with me and exalt his Name together. Herein thou wilt find excellently discovered, the rise of divifions, what hand the holy Soveraignty of God hath therein, and how the corruptions of men, even of the Godly, both raileand wonderfully heighten divisions; and how great influence

fluence occasional means may have in the fame : topethe with the fad and dreadful effects thereof; and the necessity of endeavouring unity herein. Thou will also find the curand remedy fingulary opened, not only generall grounds and preparatory endeavours for uniting, but also what things are to be forborn, and what is to be done in order to uniting, and that aswell in closing doctrinal differences, not fundamental, nor night the foundation, as for union in points not doctrinal, arising from diversity in external administrations; and especially practical differences in Churchgovernment, and about the Conflicutions and Acts of Synods when the Authority thereof is declined and denied: Yea. remedies are proposed, of divisions arising from the misans plication of power in centuring or sparing Church-officers. real or supposed. And finally, against the sears of misgovernment for the time to come, overtures are prudently given in and all closed with laying out briefly, and yet very effectually. grounds and motives of the defired union. That which I conceive is most eminent in this choice Treatife, lyeth these two things: first, That this our Caneer is mo tenderly handled, in a very abstract way, never for much as flating or particularly touching any difference among us. and yet, upon the matter, the whole discourse cometh home to the very point most pertinently. Herein anpears the finger of God to them that will have eyesto fee it. The next is this, That the holy Scriptures are diligently fearched, both in order to the difease and remedy: and the ancient Church-history and purer Antiquity, is most plentifully and sweetly made use of. The judicious and impartial Reader will, I think, fay Miscuit utile dulci. and that here are words fitly spoken, like apples of gold in pictures of filver. One thing I shall intreat, that the Reader judge not finally of any parcel or fection thereof, till he read and ponder the whole. Stumble not at his afferting, That authoritative wayes at first are not the best to cure A rene would be handled as a broken bone of a diffocation, where anointing and ligatures are to necessary as without these, healing cannot in haste be attained. Af the question be made, How's man in that case should eastly himfelf? Ought he to ftretch himfelf to the full and pur forth his

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whole ftrenth? Or is that then impossibly ? And if through Paffion in a fir it be practifed, is it not obfienctive to the recover ery of firength and healing ? Let the Reader remember this when he cometh to that part of the discourseand he will. upon that confideration, make the better use of the whole remedy ashivis proposed out shall not detain much longer the Reader from the Treatife it felf, having added thefe few confiderations , for advancing heart-uniting in the Lord which of all other, I concrive, ought to be most weighty in the judgment and on the affections of all the lovers of our Lord Jehrs Chrift First , from Eph. 20 v. 14, 15, 16, 17. the great peace-maker, in offering-up Himfelf a facrifice for the fins of the Elect, intended with the reconciling of them to God to unite them in one body among themselves : yea even thole who were at furtheft, distance and greatest enimity . Few and Gentite + and confequently other His Elect in their feveral differences and divisions throughout their generations. He took on Him the debt of their fins and their enidries, and lifted up with Himself these on His Croffe, repremeatively wirthally and meritorioully, to expire them in His flesh : and by His Spirice flesionely to flay and abolish them in due time, by making them one new man in himfelf. Mark Library from that Scripture cited; that this complex bufinels is the great defign of our bloffed and great Peace-maker. Also Geordly in the Sacrifice-feath of His Supper, this is fill represented and exhibited, till He come again: So that this flanding Ordinance, deffinated and appointed of God to carry on and feat up uniting with God, and one with another, till He come again; at His coming will stand up and testific against all who comply not with Christ, but, following their own inclination, act rather against His defign. And, thirdly, In His folemn prayer, Joh. 17. which is a focimen of His foure intercession, He mainly present after the falvation and fanctification of those that are given Him , ver. 21. That they alfo may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I'in thee, that they allo may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou haft fint me. Do not these words fignificantly and shyningly hold out, what the Mediator is ftill about; and that uniting in God is His defign fill? And fourthly, upon this same very ground, the great Apostle, speaking to Jews and Gentiles who

had imbraced the Golpel, and in themro all differnients who love the Gospel-truths and Ordinances, faith, Rom. 15.7. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Meritoriously and virtually the Elect are received to the glory of God, and to the end they may be actually received, Receive one another, faith the Apostle, as it were suspending the one upon the other. And now upon these grounds, Christ our Lord his grand design being so conspicuous, His Supper-ordinance flanding as a Land-mark in the way, having this engraven upon it, union Communion, the glorious Mediator his intercession running in that same channel; and the bleffed Apostle making this the upshor of his doctrine; what lover of our Lord, well advised and recollecting himself, dare stiffly stand out from complying with Him; to fatisfie their own inclination and habitutated cuftom and carriage. My fear is, that every one of us will look to lome others rather than themselves, as obstructing the defired uniting in the Lord. But upon mature after-thoughts, it will be found the mind of Christ, that we narrowly search our selves, every one of us, how we have provoked the Holy One to fmite us fo in His displeasure, and accuratly to try what yet remaines in us obstructive to this union; and withall to flie to our flighted duty, as in a City they run to the quenching of a publick burning, laying this evil to heart more than fword or pestilence. All the writings and actings against Presbyterial government, which is the wall of the house of God, have never wronged or harr it fo much, as our ill railed, and worlecontinued contests. Our nakedness-discovering writings, what have they done but added oyl to the flame? For Christs lake my reverend and dear Brethren, hearken to this word in feason, from the Oracles of God, and treasures of pure Antiquity, pointing out the way of a godly and edifying peace. It will be no grief of heart, but fweet peace and confolation when we are to appear before the judge of the quick and dead. Now the God of patience and confolation, grant you to belike minded one towards another, according to Christ Jelus; So heartily prayeth.

St. Andrews, April. 28.

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Your Brother and fellow-fervant,

ROBERT BLAIR.



Adda Here are, I suppose, few or none amongst us, or about us . o fogreat Strangers to the observation of Providential & Occurrents in Scotland, as to be altogether without the knowledge of what hath come to pass bere in these dans, How the boly, just and foveraign Lord, who fometime lifted us ub . bath now caft us down; who crowned us with glory and bonour, bath stript us of our glory and made the crown to fall from our head (though me have not faid, wo unto us , for we have finned) who sometimes made us a praise in the earth, bash now made us a biffing, a by-word and reproach to all that are round about us; How He, who once by our unity and one-(houlder-fervice did make us beautiful as Tirza, comely as Terufalem, and terrible as an Army with Banners, bath now, alas, (which is one of the most imbittering ingredients in our cup) in stead of giving us one beart and one way, in His anger, divided, Sub-divided, weakned, disjoynted and broken us; So that Judah, vexeth Ephraim, and Ephraim invyeth Judah, and every mans hand almost is against his brother; and through our lamentable and most unfeasonable intestine jars and diufions we bite and devour one another and are like to be confumed one of another; O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the fireets of Askelon, left the daughters of the Philiftines rejoyce, left the daughters of the uncircumciled triumph! that when God bath cast us all down together, me endeavour to keep down and tread upon one another, That when He bath been juftly angry with our mother, ber children are finfully angry one with another, and when He bath caft us all into the furnace, we are even there strugling and wreftling one with another to the encreasing of the flame; And when brotherly love and lothness to give or take offence, is in a fecial manner called-for lovedid never wax morecold, nor offences more abound. Now, when our Church thus in a manner distracted and drunk with the wine of aftonishment, is in so sad a posture, and but few of the fons the bath brought forth to guide ber or take ber by the hand, they all almost fainting and lying at the head of

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every freet as it were fo many wild bulls in a net, full of the fury of the Lord and of the rebuke of our God; Then fleppeth forth (the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him) one of her fons, the Author of this excellent Treatife concerning Scandal) having made some ferious effayes before to take his mother by the hand . though but with [mall acceptance with many of his Brethren, for which, it may be, the jealous God was in part provoked to remove him) whereby, as by his latter will and Teftament, especially to the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, he doth again renew his formerly fruitless and unsuccessfull attempt: In which Treatise as there breatbeth a far more tweet and favoury foirit, than in most. of not all of the Papers published upon occasion of our late tamencable differences, (which I hope will by none be looked upon as any reflection) So there is throughout a most strong and fragrant smell of more than ordinary piety, that it may be averred of him. as once it was of Cyril of Jerusalem, in his last and best auyes, he was magnæ sanctimoniæ vir, a man of eminent sanctity: It plainly also speaketh forth special acquaintance with the Scriptures (for in all his discourses as it's said of Basil) he doth exquisitly mingle divine testimonies of Scripture, that they are like precious flones, not fewed to, but bred in purple cloathes 1 and intimacy with the mind of God, as to what may be duty under the various diffensations of his providence, So that it may be said of him, he was a man that had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do; for be doth with admirable per-Dicacity take up, and with no leffe dexterity direct unto, what bught to be done in this, and that; and the other case; as a most kilful Anatomist diffecting the whole complex body of duties in reference to ordinary and extraordinary cases and emergents never niffing, as it were, one lith or joynt, and like a left hand Benamire, that in the greatest intricacies, and gravest difficulties can fling fromes at an hairs breadth and not mille. It favoureth likewise all-along of a most sharp strong and pregnant wit, in supofing cases, proposing pertinent overtures and expedients in disofing of arguments, framing distinctions, anticipating objections n cautious guarding against mistakes and inconveniences, &c. to that it's verified of him what was once faid of Origen. Orig enis ingenium sufficiebat ad omnia perdifeenda, he had such pregnancy of wir that he could reach any thing; and of Joseph caliger he was portentofi ingenii vir, a man of a stupendious WIC.

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wit. It discovereth mithell so very great insight in Church-biffen and writings of the ancient Fathers, wherewith it is every when most beautifully illuminate, that it may well be faid of him as one of fweet Bucholtzer, that one would have thought universam an tiquitatem in ejus pectusculo latuisse reconditam, that all antiquity lay hid in his break; and of famous Mr Holland, Regin Professor of Divinity in Oxford, Adeo familiaris eratcu Patribus acfi ipse pater, He was so familiarly acquainted with the Fathers as if himself had been one of them. As for his file and manner of expressing bemself, it savoureth very much of the primitive and Gospel-Amplicity, So that what is spoken to to the commendation of Bafil by a learned man, may fitly be applied to the Author, The Reader will find in him a simple and natural form of speech, flowing from his holy breast, much drained of all humane passions; And that which is said of Ambrose, he studied non aures titillare, sed corda pungere, not to tickle and please ears, but to prick hearts: As likewise that which is faid of another great man, His words were, non inflantia fed inflammantia, not inflating but inflaming : He theweth himself here many waves to have been indeed a great man; but I (having been his Colleague in the Ministery and of his very intimate acquaintance for fome years) knew him to be fuch more particularly and several other wayes, So that while I reflect upon, and call to remembrance a bat I have feen in , and beard from him, I am constrained to fay, as once Urbanus Regius (a man much more able indeed to difcern) faid of Luther, upon accasion of a conference with him, Semper fuit mihi magnus, at jam mihi maximus est; vidi enim præsens & audivi que pullo calamo tradi possunt absentibus. He was alwayes to me a great man but now very great; for I saw and heard things when I was present with him, which can hardly by any pen be communicated to those that were absent. In a word, as to the whole Treatife, it may, I think, without any hyperbole be faid, that it is universally most profitable and secsonably beautiful; For, in the first part of it concerning Scandal in the general (excellently compended and commended as all the rest are, by the stately-fyling and precious Prefacer, like-minded in all thefe things with th bleffed Author, whose fage mind in them, and not the leffe because of this co-incidency, would be more laid weight upon, left we b put out of time to lament alfo the loffe af fuch a Healer and Pille in this forely fick and shaken church I In the first part; I fay, th anci en

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-biftory ancient, primitive, long-dead, buried, and almost-forgotten ceny when dernelle in the matter of Offence (a Specially-advening requifit to as one christian and Gospel-becoming conversation) is again revived am an and portraied as rifen from the dead with a most amiable and comely countenance and taking aspect, fo that it forceth the ferious Regius beholders to fay; Peace be upon as many as walk according to this Rule. In the second part concerning Scandals as they are the object azinted of church consures, there is a very compleat and compast directory for his according to the Scripture pattern for Church-officers how to manmuch of age the great Ordinance of Discipline in its exercise, which, if it oken to were diligently and confisenciously followed in the feveral fleps e appliof it, as it was most convincingly so by the Author himself would e and undoubtedly make that work both much more easie and much more much faccesful than it ufeth ordinarily to be. In the third part concerning Scandalous Errours, wonderfully fuited to this time of fo great infection , fickneffe and mortality by the raging plague and botch of errour, exceedingly gathered to a head; ripened and made to break and run out, to the infecting, in a manner, of the very air wherein the Churches of thefe Nations breath, by the beat and warmnesse afforded to it from a lamentable liberty and valt Toleration ; In this third part, flay, there is, as it were , a Phylicians Shop, full of choice preservatives against, and soveraign remedies of, poyfonable errours and berefies. In the forch part, concerning Scandalous Divisions, he doth, as another Irenaus, with much methneffe of wisdom and singular moderation of Spirit, without any the least reflection or irritation, most tenderly, singly, unbyaffedly and impartially, and most affectionatly, as a man burnt with the offence that waiteth on divisions among & godly Ministers. especially, strongly endeavour an innocent and wholesom union and composure, so that (as an eminent, aged and experienced servant of Jefus chrift, whose pratse is in the Gospel throughout all these Churches, when he first saw this Piece in writ, said) it will be unwelcom to none but such as are led with a bitter spirit; to which may well be added, that as it's reported of Nazianzen, he was of such authority in the Greek Churches, that who oever durst oppose his testimony was suspected to be an Heretick: So may it be faid of the piously and prudently-peaceable, and bealing-Spirited Author, that he deserveth to be of fuch authority, at leaft in the Scottish Church, that whoever shall adventure to oppose (as it's hoped none will I his wife, harm-less, boly and bealing Over-

BAYES.

sures, may be suspected to be no great friend to the union and peace of this afflict and rent Church. I will not, Christian Reader, detain thee any longer from perufing this notable Tractate , but fhall only offer to thy grave and ferious confideration thefe two things, which I supose will not a little commend the same unto thee, especially a to the last part of it; one is, That the Author, when he was (bu a very little before his laft fichness, and after his finishing the three first parts) most unexpectedly surprised with a motion sugselfed to him anent the expediency of bandling somewhat of the Scandal of Divisions, it did so exceedingly affright him, and had fuch aftonifbing influence upon him through the apprehended difficulty and ticklishness of the subject (fortender was he) that (as bimletf did to some afterward profess) he funk down in his feat and yet being convinced of the necessity of faying somewhat to it, the Lord baving withall belped bim in the other parts , be durst, not forbear; whereupou this choice discourse (for it was not divided in Chapters till afterward) did follow, much whereof I know and amperswaded did occur and wasgiven unto him inter dictandum. The other thing is, That sometimes before his death to some friends, he did humbly and gravely call it his Testament to the Church of Scotland; which Testament and Latter-will of a dead but vet freaking-faithfull fervantofGod, will Ihope in due time be confirmed by all godly, judicious, fober, peaceable and unprejudicate men, as containing in it a most excellent and enriching Legacy, worthy to be put into the Churches Treasury. Now, that it may go forth with a rich bleffing from the God of truth and peace to all the honest-hearted lovers of the truth in the peace for the advancement of truth and a boly peace, is the defire of him , who defireth to be

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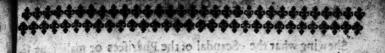
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Aving had occasion to consider the Book of the Revelation, and being on the Epistle to the Church of Pergamos in the fecond Chapter, ground was given to speak somewhat of Scandal, by reason of several doctrines clearly arifing from that place : upon this occasion I did first essay the writing of something of the doctrine of Scandal in general, intending only to have spent a sheet or two thereupon, as elsewhere on some other subjects: When this was brought to a close, I found the place to give ground to speak of publick Church-offences, as they are the object of Con Church-discipline and Censures; And being conspoken of, I yeelded to spend some thoughts upon it also, which did draw to a greater length then at first was intended, or was fultable for a digreffion: This being finished, as it is, and any moe thoughts of this subject laid by, it occurred again to me to think of doctrinal Scandals: or of scandalous Errors; And confidering that the Scandals, mentioned in that place, are of fuch nature, and that fuch are very frequent in this time, I yeelded also to put together what thoughts the Lord would furnish concerning the fame; whereupon followed the third part of this Treatife. When this was even at the clofing, there was a fourth part of the same subject that did occur to me to be thought on, which before that had never been minded, and that was concerning scandalous Church-divisions:

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visions: To this my mind and inclination was exceeding averse at first, as knowing it not only to be difficult in it self to be medled in, but also exceedingly above me, who am altogether unsuitable to hazard on such a subject: Yet, considering the rise of the motion, and how the Lord had helped-through the other parts, I did resolve to condescend to sollow it, at least so far, till it might appear what was His mind to me therein, and accordingly did sollow it till it came to the period (whatever it be) that now it is at.

This is the true rise and occasion of this Treatise, and of the several Parts thereof, and therefore I have continued its entry in the original mould thereof, to wit, inlaying down some general doctrines from that place of Scripture, and if there be afterward any more particular relation to second and third chapters of the Revelation than to other Scriptures, this simple narration of the rise thereof may satisfie any concerning the same whereof we shall say no more, but, first, lay down the grounds of all from that text, and then proceed in the Treatise, which is divided in sour parts, upon the reasons formerly hinted at.

The grounds of this Treatife.

Mongst other things that troubled the Church in the primitive times, Scandal, or, offence, was a chief one: and the many directions that are given concerning it, and the reproofs that are of it, shew that it is a main piece of a Christians conversation to walk rightly in reference thereto, and a great evidence of loosnesse where it is not heeded. On ver. 6. We shew that this was a foul fault of the Nicolaitans to be carelesse of offending, or of giving of offence, and not to regard Scandal; and here the Lord holdeth it forth to be so, by comparing it with Balaam's practice, ver. 14. which is agreaged from this, that he taught Balac to lay a stumbling-block before israel. From which these doctrines may be gathered, 1. That there is such a fault incident to men

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in their carriage, even to lay flumbling-blocks before others, and to offend them. 2. That men ought to walk fo as not to offend others, or fo, as to lay no stumbling-block before them : So that it is not enough to stumble themselves, (if this could be separated from the other) but also they ought to be careful not to stumble others: 3. The Lord doth take special notice how men do walk in reference to others in this, and is highly provoked where He feeth any guilty of it. 4. The devil hath ever endeavoured to have offences abounding in the Church, and to make some lay such stumbling-blocks before others. is most hurtful to the Church, and destructive to souls where offences abound, and men walk not tenderly in reference to these: so that the Lord expresseth it with a twofold wo, Matth. 18. as being a wo beyond ning fword or peftilence. 6. We may gather, that corrupt doctrine never wanteth offences joyned with it. t, lay pro- and that ordinarily those who spread that, are untender in this. 7. That offences often accompany the rife and beginning of any work of Christ's amongst a people; these tares of offences are ordinarily then fown. 8. That some offences are of a publick nature, and that Church-officers should take notice of fuch, and that it is offensive to Christ when they are over-seen and not taken heed unto. 9. Church-officers, even such as otherwayes are approved in their carriage and ministery, may fall in this fault, as by comparing the Epistles to Pergamos and Thyatira, is clear. 10. When Officers fall in this fault, it is yet no reprovable thing in members that are pure in respect of their own personal carriage to continue in communion with fuch a Church, the Ordinances otherwayes being pure.

PART



PART. I.

The sum of it,

Hele doctrins being in the words, and Scandal being a great part of the challenge of the Nicolaitans, or at least a great aggravation of their challenge, and also being a most necessary thing for a Christain's dayly walk, to be carefully taken heed unto, there is ground here to speak to the same, (in a time especially wherein offences abound) and that in refpect of what is called-for, both in private persons and in Church-judicatories; or, of private (candals, and such as are publick. We shall draw what we would say of the first to these five, 1. To shew what an offence is. 2. To shew how it is given. 3. To flew some considerations that ought to deter from giving of it. 4. To fhew what weight it ought to have on a Christian in his walk. 5. Point at some directions necessary to be adverted unto when offences are rife and multiply.

CHAP. I.

Several Destinctions of Scandal.

Or cleating of the first two, we shall premit fome distinctions; and we would advert, that by offence here, is not understood that which doth actually displease or grieve another alway: for there is a great difference betwint displeasing and offending; as also betwint pleasing and edifying: for, one may be displeased, and yet edified; well fatisfied, and yet offended. First then, we are to distinguish betwint First Di-displeasing and offending; for, here offence is taken similion. in opposition, not to a man's being pleased, but

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to his edification; and so offence or stumbling in fhort here, is something that doth, or may mar the spiritual edification of another, whether he be pleased or displeased, as by comparing Rom. 14.ver.12.with ver. 20, and 21. Is clear : for what he first calleth a flumbling block, or an offence, he expoundeth it afterward to be any thing that may be the occasion of a fall to another, and make him stumble, or weak or to halt in the course of holiness, as some block would hinder or put a man in hazard to fall in the running of prace; And from this is the fimilitude drawn in this phrase.

2. Scandal is either given only, or taken only, or Second Diboth. Given only, is, when one doth lay something stinction.

before another which is apt of it self to cause him fall or fin, although the other do not fall by occasion of it, yet if it be inductive to fin of its own nature, it is an offence or flumbling-block, as Christ saith to Peter, Matth. 16. Thou art an offence to me; though there was nothing could flick to Him, yet that was in its nature such, which Peter had given Him in advice.

2. It is taken only, when no occasion is given, but when a man doth what is not only lawful, but necessary, and yet others from their own corruption do carp thereat, and stumble thereon: Thus did the Pharifees offend at Christ, Matth. 15. 12. who did never give offence to any: and this is common to wicked men, that flumble where no flumbling-block is, and, as it is faid, they know not whereat they ftumble, Prov.4.19. This also is called passive offence, as the other is called active. 3. It is both given and taken when there is something active on the one side, that is apt to draw another to fin, and something that is yeelded unto on the otherfide, and the bait is accepted : This was it in that flumbling-block which Balaam laid before Ifrael; and thus ordinarily it is amongst men, who, having corruption, are foon inflamed in leffe or more with every incitement. Thus, Gal. 2. Peter gave Barnabas offence, and he took it, when he was also carried away to diffemble. It is this active

Scandal

Scandal that properly is to be enquired in, and is meant here, which is, in short, any deed or word that in it self is apt to make another to sin, or to weaken them in their spiritual course, either in respect of life, or comfort, and that whether the person be actually stumbled or not, or whether the person actually intend offence or not. In all this we are to understand that one act may be offensive in many considerations, as one deed may be against many commands, and be many wayes sinfull,

Third Di-

2. There are doctrinal offences, and there are some that are practical: doctrinal, are such as flow from matters of judgement, wherein men vent some untruth, and so lay a stumbling-block before others, this is to break a commandment, and to reach others fo to do, Matth. 5. 19. and this is sometimes also in mattersof practice, when a corrupt practice is defended as these Nicolaitans strove to do theirs. Scandal in practice, without any doctrinal defence, is, when doctrine being kept pure;a person falleth in some pradice, that of it felf without any verbal expression, is inductive to fin. Thus David's adultery was a scandal: andthis was the fault of the Priests, that made the people trumble at the Law: And thus every publick or known irregular action is offensive, because it is of ill example to others, or otherwise may have influence on them to provoke to fome fin.

Fourth Di-

4. We may diffinguish offences according to the matter thereof. And, 1. some are in matters that are simply sinfull in themselves, and have this also following on them: Thus all errors and publick sinfull practices are offensive. 2. Some matters are not simply and in themselves sinfull, yet have the appearance of evil, 1. Twest. 5.17. and thus dangerous and doubtful expressions in doctrine, that have been, or use to be abused; and practices also that are not becoming that honesty and good report which a Christian ought to study, as it is Philip. 4. 8, 9. are offensive. In the first respect, David would not take the name of Idols in his mouth, Psal. 16. because others

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did too much reverence them: Of the last fort was Peter's diffimulation and withdrawing, Gal. 2. because. that appeared to strengthen the opinion of the continuing of the difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, &c. for that cause, Paul would not circumcife Titus, Gal. 2. 2. and did condemn eating in the Idol-temples. 2. Some offences are in matters otherwise lawful and indifferent, though not necessary, as the eating of, or abflaining from meats, or what was offered to Idols in the primitive times, which was indifferent to be done in the house of an Heathen, and so was sometimes lawful, but was not indifferent to be done in the Idoltemple, because that had the appearance of evil, as if he had had some respect to the Idol; nor was it to be done, if any weak Brother hadbeen at table in the house, because it grieved him, I cor. 8. and 10. It is these last two, (and more especially the third) that are concerned in the doctrine of offences properly. and do rather arise from circumstances in the thing. as time, place, person, manner, &c. than from the deed confidered in it felf.

4. We may distinguish them in respect of the intent Fifth Diof the work, or of the worker: some things may be finction. offensive in themselves as so circumstantiated, and yet not be foto the person that may give offence by them; I mean, not be effeemed so: and thus was Peters offence which he laid before Christ, Matth. 16. fometimes theperson mayintend theothers advantage. and yet may offend and stumble him, as Eli intended his fons good, but really by his too gentle reproof did flumble them by confirming them in their offence: And thus some, by unseasonable reproofs or censures, and commendations also, may really make another worse, although they intend the contrary.

6. Whence ariseth another distinction of offences, Sixth Diviz. from the matter of a practice, or from the man- finction. ner of performing of it, or the circumstances in the doing of it: for, as it is not an act materially good that will edifie, except it be done in the right man-

kethe others did ner; so will not an act materially good keep off offence, if it be not done tenderly, wisely, &c. And often we find circumstances have much influence on offence; as times, persons, places, manner,&c. for, it is not offensive to one to pray or preach, but at some times, as before an Idol, or on an Holy-day it may be offensive.

Seventh Distinction

7. As fins are diffinguished in fins of omission and commission; So offences may be distinguished also: for, some give offence when they swear, pray irreverently, &c. Others, when there is no feeming respect to prayer at all, in the very form, for this fostereth profanity as the other doth : And for this Daniel will open his window, left he should be thought to have forborn prayer: and this offence of ommission, or omiffive offence, is not guarded against only by doing what is duty, except there be also a doing of it io as conveniently, and as becomes it may be done, as in the former instance: and this, Rev. 6. 9. is called the holding of the Testimony; and it is this mainly that is edifying to others, when the light of holinesse doth shine; and when that is vailed, others in so far have darknesse to walk in , and so it is as to them an occasion to stumble, because they hold not forth the light unto them; but still this is to be done without affectation or oftentation, lest a new offence should follow thereupon.

tht Di-

8. Some offences contrare to the graces of Gods People, and these make them sad; some softer corruptions, and these are too pleasant: thus, soft reproofs, corrupt advices, flatteries, &c. minister matter to

many to fall on.

th Di- 9. Some offences maybe called personal, when a person.

Jion.

Some offences maybe called personal, when a person committeeth them in his private carriage, that is, when his way of eating, drinking, living, &c. offendeth others, although he hath no medling with them, but live retiredly: Some again are more direct offences (as the first are indirect and consequential) that is which flow from men in their publick actings, or in their mutual converse with others, which have more

direct influence to offend.

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10. Offences may be diffinguished as they hart Tenth Difolks, either by pleafing them in their corruptions and finction. strengthening them in what is finful, or when they hurt by irritating and ftirring up corruptions to vent. In the first respect, too much gentlenesse in admonitions, rathnesse or imprudence in commendations of what is good in one, or extenuation of what is evil, corrupt advice, and such like, do offend : Thus 70nadab offended Amnon, 2 Sam. 13 and Eli his fons. In the last, sleighting of men, wronging of them, or not condescending to remove a wrong, or to vindicate our felves, if there be a supposed wrong, doth grieve and offend; so do evil-grounded reproofs, or unadvertent admonitions that are not feafoned with

love, hard reports, &c.

11. We may consider offences with respect to the party offended; and so, first, we offend friends in ma- Distinction ny respects, whom, it may be, we would not defire to grieve, yet unadvertingly we stumble them, and hurt their spiritual condition by unfaithfulnesse to them, carnalnesse in conversing with them, siding with their infirmities, and many such like wayes. Or; secondly, they are enemies, or fuch to whom we bear no fuch respect, these also are scandalized when they are provoked through the carnalnesse of our way to judge hardly of us, or of Religion for our fake, or to follow some carnal course to oppose what we carnally do. when we irretate them and provoke their paffion, &c. and thus men in all debates are often guilty, whether their contest be in things Civil, Ecclesiastick or Scholattick, when, beside what may further their cause (suppose it to be just) they do not carry respectively to the adversary, and tenderly and convincingly, so as it may appear they feek the good of their foul, and their edification, even when they differ from them. Thirdly, we may look on offence as ir offendeth wicked or profane men, peffibly Heathens, Jews, or Gentiles; they are offended when hardned in their impiety by the groffnesse and uncharitablenesse of those who are professedly tender: thus it is a fault,

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more 10. 1 Cor. 10. 32. to give offence eirther to Jews, or Gentiles, as to the Church of God. Fourthly, Amongst those that are tender, some are more weak, some are more strong: the first are often offended where there is no ground in the matter, as Rom. 14. 1 Cor. 8. & and it venteth readily by rash judging and censuring of others that are stronger than themselves, for going beyond their light, or because of their seeming to be despised by them, &c. which sheweth wherein the offence of the strong also lyeth; therefore these two are put together, Rom. 14. 3. Let not him that eateth, (that is him, that is strong) despise him that eateth not: And let not him that eateth not (that is, the weak) judge him that eateth.

Twelfth Di-

12. Offences may be confidered as they directly incline or tempt to fin, either in doctrine or practice; or, as they more indirectly scare and divert from, or make more faint and weak in the pursuing of holiness either in truth or practife: Thus a' blot in some professor maketh Religion to be some way abhorred; this especially falleth out when Ministers and Professors that are eminent, become offensive: For that is as a dead fly in the box of the Apothecaries oyntment, that maketh all to flink: Thus, Mal. 1. the Priefts made the people stumble at the Law; as also did the fons of Eli, Sam. 2. and this is charged on David, that by his fall he made the Heathen blaspheme: and thus contention and division amongst Ministers and Disciples is infinuated to stand in the way of the worlds believing in, or acknowledging of Christ, as it is, Joh 17.21.

Thirteenth Distinction. 13. Sometimes Scandal is in immediate duties of religious worship, as praying, preaching, conferring, speaking, judging of such things, &c. that is, either by miscarrying in the matter of what is spoken, or by an unreverent, light, pussionate manner, &c. or, it is given by our ordinary and common carriage in our eating, drinking, apparelling, manner of siving, buying and selling, &c. that is, when something of our way in these things giveth evidence of pride, vanity,

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unconstancy, covetousnesse, addictednesse to pleasure, carnalness, or some such thing whereby our neighbour is wronged: Thus the husband may offend the wife. and the wife the husband by their irreligious converfing together, whereby one of them doth ftrengthen the other to think exactnesse in Religion not so necessary. And so a servant who hath a profession may stumble a master, if the servant be not faithfull

and diligent in his service.

14. Again, some offences are offensive, and are Fourteenth given from the first doing of the action; thus where Distinctithere is an appearance of evil, the offence is given in on. this manner. Again, offence may be at first only taken and not given, and yet afterward become given, and make the person guilty, although in the first act he had not been guilty. This is, first, when suppose a man eating without respect to difference of meats as he might do indifferently, if he were told by one that fuch meat were offered to an Idol, and therefore in his judgement it were not lawful to eat it, although before that, it were not offence given, but taken, (he notknowing that any were present that would offend) vet if he should continue after that to do the same thing, it should be offence given upon his side. Secondly, If a man know one to have taken offence at him, or his carriage, in a thing indifferent (although he had given no just occasion thereof) and if, after his knowledge thereof, he should not endeavour to remove the same according to his place, In that case the offence becometh given also, because he removeth not that flumbling-block out of his brother's way.

15. Some offences are offensive in themselves, that Fifteenth is, when the thing it felf hath some appearance of evil, Distinctior a tendency to offend in it felf. Again, some but by on. accident in respect of some concurring circumstance of time, place, &c. Some offences also may be said to be given of infirmity, that is, when they proceed from a particular flip of the party offending, when they are not continued in, fluck to, or defended or,

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when they fall into them, not knowing that they would be offensive: and when that is known, endeavouring to remove them. Again, other offences are more rooted and confirmed, as when a person hath a track in them, is not much careful to prevent them, or remove them, is not much weighted for them, but sleighteth them, or desendeth them, &c. This distinction osoffences answereth to that distinction of sins, in sins of infirmity and sins of malice: which maliciousnesse is not to be referred to the intent of the person, but to the nature of the act; so is it to be understood here in respect of offences.

Sixteenth Distincti-

16. In the last place, we may consider that distinction of Scandals in private and publick: both which may be two wayes understood; either r. in respect of the witnesses; or, 2. in respect of the nature of them. 1. It is a private scandal in the first respect, which doth offend few, because of its not being known to many, and so a publick offence in this respect is a scandal known to many. Thus the same offence may be a private offence to one at one time, and in one place; and a publick offence to another, or the same person, in respect of these circumstances. In the last respect, a private offence is that possibly which doth stumble many, yet is not of that nature, as publickly, legally, or judicially it might be made out to be scandalous, for the convincing of a person offending, or of others, althoughit may have a great impression upon the hearts of those who know it. Thus the general tract of ones way and carriage (who yet may be civil, legal, and fair in all particulars) may be exceeding offensive, as holding forth to the consciences of those that are most charitable to him, much vanity, pride, earthly-mindednesse, untendernesse, want of love and respect, and the like: which faith within the heart of the beholders, that there are many things wrong, when yet no particular can be instanced wherein the person cannot have fair legal answers; Of this fort are unfeafonable frarting of questions, or doubtful disputations, Rom. 14. wherein possibly the person may affert

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fert truth, yet by moving fuch things, at fuch times. and in such expressions, he doth confound and shake the weak: Those offences especially arise from a supposed unstraightness in the end, excesse in the manner of a thing, disproportionablenesse betwixt a man's way and his station, and such like, wherof, a man may have much conviction in himself, from observing of fuch an ones way; yet it is not a publick offence in the senie spoken of here, because there is no demontracing of those. Thus Absolom's infinuating, self-seeking way gave evidence of pride; and such as Paul Speaketh of, Philip. 1. and 2. that some preached out of envie, and others fought their own things. &c. are of this nature, which by his discerning he was convinced of, yet did not found any fentence on them.

Again, oppositly to these, Offences may be called publick, when there is a possible way of bearing them out before others, or instructing them in particulars to be contrary to the rule, as drunkennesse. swearing, &c. These may be called ecclesiastick or judicial offences, as being the object of Churchcensure, all the other may be called conscience, or charity-wounding offences, because they are the object of a persons conscience and charity, and do wound them, and are judged by them, and may be the ground of a christian private admonition, but not of publick reproof; or rather may be called unconsciencious, and uncharitable offences, as being oppofit to conscience and charity.

Many other distinctions of Scandals may be given, Other Dia as, some are immediate, that is, when we hear or see stinctions what is offensive from the person himself ; Some a- of Scandal. gain are mediate, and so the very reporting of something that is true may be offensive to those to whom It is reported; As, 1. when it may alienate them from, or irritate them against another person.2. When it may occasion some finful diftemper, or incite to some corrupt course, or any way provoke to carnalnelle,, those to whom it is reported : and thus offence

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differeth from flander : for , flander affecteth and wrongeth the party spoken of, who, it may be, is abfent: Offence again, flumbleth those who are present, although the same act in a person may be both a calumny and an offence upon different confiderations. Thus Ziba calumniateth Mephibosheth, but really flumbleth and offendeth David, 2Sam. 16. (although David was not, so displeased with him as Mephibosheth was) So also Doeg calumniateth David and the Priests in a thing which was true, but really offended Saul. as the effed cleared, I Sam. 21. and 22. Also some things offend others properly; as when a Minister faileth in giving of an admonition prudently, or feafonably. Again, some things offend virtually, when, it may be a Minister giveth an advice in season, but in fomething hath not condescended formerly, whereby he hath not such accesse with his admonition to edifie; Thus Paul prevented offence, when by becoming all things to all, he made way for his being acceptable in his flation. Again, some offences may fimply be offences, as having hurt with them. Some again may be comparatively; is it is when a thing actually hurteth, not by an emergent loffe, but when it keepeth from that growth and edification, that otherwayes might have been, it's a comparative loffe, and fo offenfive.

CHAP. II.

Holding forth what Offence is not, and what it is.

Hese generals may give a hint of what is signified by Offence and how it is given. To adde a word more particularly to the first Question; Let us consider, 1. what offence is not; 2. what it is. 1. It is not alwayes any hurtful and actually displeasing thing to the partythat is offended; and so it is not to be constructed such, or not, from their pleasure, or displeasure. 2: It is not alwayes to be judged by the matter; sor, an offence maybe in a

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lawful marter, that fimply le me to be condemned, as in eating, drinking, taking wages for preaching, &c. 3. It is not alway to be determined by the effect; sometimes one may be offended, when no offence was given: fometimes again, offence may be given, and the person be guilty thereof (as hath been faid) when no actual flumbling hath followed, but the thing of it self was inductive thereto. 4. Nor is it to be judged by the person's intention; one may be withour all defign of hurtting, who yet may really wound, and offend another, and be guilty by rathnelle, omission, too much love and condescension in sparing, unfaithfulnesse (it being much to be faithfulf to one that we love, and, which is a pity, we are readlest to offend them, as in Jonadab's case to Amnon; yea, in 70b's friends to him, &c.) inconfiderate zeal, imprudency, or falling in something, that is as a dead fly, which may make much that is profitable, become unsavoury. 2. Scandal then must be some thing accompanying some external deed or word(for internal give not offence) which being confidered at fuch a time, in fuch a place, or in fuch a person, &c. may be inductive to fin, or impeditive of the spiritual life or comfort of others. When this doth flow from a finful act, it is not so difficultly discernable, readily all actions that are materially evil, are clear; but the difficulty is when the matter is lawful or indifferent in it felf; or when it is in the manner and other circumstances of a lawful or necessary duty. then to discern when they become scandalous in such respects; and accordingly to be swayed to do or abstainin the matter, and to do in this or some other manner, as may eschew the same. This properly and firictly is that which is called offence, and is that wherein most wisdom is to be exercised in ordering and regulating us in the use of christian liberty; and concerning this are the great debates in Scripture, that men may know, that not only the Command is to be looked unto in the matter of the act, fo that nothing be done against it in that respect nor only that

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our own clearneffe be confidered, that we do nothing doubtingly, but that others be confidered also that they by our deed be not in their spiritual estate wronged, or hurt, that is, to do or abstain for consciencefake, not our own, but of him that fitteth with us. I Cor. 10. 24, and 28. for if charity and love be the end of the Law, and men ought not only to feek their own things, but the things one of another, and love their neighbour as themselves, then ought they to seek their neighbours edification as their own, and to elchew the prejudging of them. Hence Scandal is opposit to that charity and love, and also to that respect which we ought to carry to our Brother, Rom. 14: v. 10, and 15. yea, it is a scandal and offence as it is opposite to, and inconfistent with, love to his spiritual welbeing; and fo, in a word, that which is apt to make him worse in that respect, or that which may impede and hinder his spiritual growth and advancement therein, is an offence and fcandal, Rom. 14. 21. And thus a scandal differeth from an injury: for this hurreth his person, name, or estate, or some ourward thing: that, again, hurteth his spiritual condition. either by wronging his livelinesse, or activity, or comfort,&c. though the same thing often, which is an injury, is an offence also, but not contrarily,

CHAP. III.

Concerning the several wayes that Offence may be given.

T is hardly possible to shew how many wayes one may offend another, there being so many, yea, so very many wayes whereby men both wrong themselves and others; yet, by considering the effects that offence given, hath, or may have upon others (although the effect sollow not) and by considering that upon which astive offence worketh, and which usually is offended at in another. We may draw them to some heads accordingly; As 1. men may be drawn

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to some finful action upon such an occasion: thus coms one yea, wrong effects rs (alg that ufual-

an action materially lawful and good in it felf, becometh a fcandal, when by our deed another is foflered in some fin, or encouraged to commit it, as supposing himself to be strengthned therein by our practice; Or when it may occasion others to go beyond our intent, or to do what we do in another manner which may make it finful: So, zeal inconfiderately vented, may strengthen folks in passion; and thus eating in Idols temples (which in it felf was nothing) was scandalous when done publickly, because it strengthned Idolaters to think somewhat of their Idols, and made others who were weak, to continue some respect to them, because they supposed such men, by fuch a practice to do fo; or made some judge them to have respect to Idols, and so to be less in their effeem; or, caused others to eat with respect to the Idol, when they themselves did it without it: Thus doubtful expressions in points of Truth, and uncircumpectnesse in nor abstaining from all appearance of evil, or what doth appear to be evil to fuch a perfon, and at such a time, &c. may be offenfive; as suppose one in their apparrel, diet, or otherwayes, should by some be conceived to go beyond their station, and what is fit at fuch a rime, or be an occation to some others indeed to exceed, when, without fuch misconstructing beholders, there might be nothing offensive in the deed it self; and thus the deed of one person may be offensive (supposing him to be efteemed proud, covetous, unclean, &c.) which would not be so in another : So also, a thing will be offenfive to one, and not to another. Wherefore, in reference to Offence, men would have an eye on themselves, and what generally they are reputed to be, and fo would abstain from the least appearance of what is supposed to be predominant in them, as also they would have respect to others that are present, or may be hearers or beholders, confidering what are their thoughts of them, or of such deeds, &c. and accordingly would carry, although is were to abstain from

fuch a place, apparel, diet, &c. which in reason, abfiractly from offence, might be pleaded for, as becoming. Thus one walking abroad on the Sabbath, may
be sanctifying it, yet by his example some other may
be provoked to vage and gad and cast off all duties of
the day, and to neglect what is called-for in secret, or
in the samily; in that respect, it becometh offensive to
go abroad, although it be lawful in it self to meditate

abroad in the fields, as well as in the house.

2. When a lawfull act doth breed or occasion misconstruction or rash judging in an other, then it becometh offensive to him; As, 1. when it maketh him think the thing unlawful, which is lawful, that is, (Rom. 14. 16.) to make our good to be evil spoken of: Or, 2. when it occasioneth our selves by that deed to be condemned as untender and unconscientious in the performing of such an act, that is, to make one judge his brother rashly, Rom. 14. 10. 1 Cor. 10. 30. Or, 3. when it occasioneth our profession, or the Gospel to be mistaken and misjudged, or godlinesse to be accounted fancie, hypocrisie, &c. Thus by the indiscrect use of liberty, the Gospel was evil spoken of by some, as if it had given way to loosnesse, for so those that were zealous for the Law did esteem of it.

3. The effect of a Scandal, is to grieve and make heavie others; and so any indifferent action which is apt to do that, is a scandal, as we may see, Rom. 14. 15. because it marreth their spiritual comfort, weakneth them in love to us, fainteth them in the doing of duty, at least marreth their chearfulnesse in it, &c. and so is against charity, and becometh a breach of the sixth Command, Rom. 14. 15. This is the notion that most ordinarily we use to take up offence under, viz. when it may grieve some to hear that we have done such a thing, when it may lessen their esteem of us, (and so much incapacitate us to be profitable to them)

or alienate them from us, &c.

4. We may try Scandal by our hazarding to difquiet the peace of our brother's conscience: that is, when by our lawful deed we engage or virtually

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perswade him to follow our example, supposing him to doubt of the lawfulnesse of that practice, or to condemn the same. Thus, I cor. 8. 10. one is emboldened to eat of things offered to Idols, with respect to them, because he beholdeth another that is more strong than he to do the same. And so by his eating he giveth ground to his conscience afterward to challenge him, for which cause he that gave the example, is faid to wound his weak conscience. The like also is, Rom. 14. 22, 23. in the case of doubting: for, suppofing one to doubt whether fuch a thing be lawful or not, meerly by our example to go before him, is to put him in that strait either to condemn our deed, or doubtingly to follow; for, the meer example of no man can warrant any other to follow, or fatisfie a conscience in the lawfulnesse of such and such a deed: This also may be when a weak man, having possibly done something in another manner, (and that lawfully) than afterward he beholdeth one that is ffrong to do, (which also may be lawful in it felf) he is brought to look over his own practice, and to condemn the fame as finful, meerly because that other did it in another manner. For, though indifferency in the manner of practices in lawful things, is sometimes edifying, yet in such cases when they have not sufficient information joyned with them, they drive men on the extremities forefaid, and so become offensive, especially then when such things are actually doubted of, or disputed in their lawfulnesse.

fructive to the edification of others, and, as the word is, Rom. 14. 21. do make them weak, or infirmeth them, not only by fainting and weighting them, as is said before, but by confounding them in the Truth or practices of Religion, whereby they are either shaken in their former affurances, and so weakened, or made doubtful whether such things be Duties and Truths, or not; or, by such and such things, are diverted from the more necessary practices of Religion. This is the scope of Rom. 14. ver. 1, &c. and of other Scriptures

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elswhere, wherby the Apostle Paul doth guard against doubtful disputations, which do not profit them that are occupied therein, Heb. 13. 9. And thus, not only writing and reasoning for what is not Truth, but writing and speaking of Truth in a new manner, with new expressions and multiplying moulds of these, or doing it unleasonably, passionarly, contentiously &c. doth prove offensive. Thus what is not actually edifying, is offensive; and upon this account, Paul becometh all things to all, that he may gain some, as in his circumcifing of Timothy that he might have access to edifie the Jews, and such like; And thus often not condescending in judifferent things to please others, doth much incapacitate them to be edified by us, or doth give them prejudice at the way of the Gospel, whereby their edification is obstructed and they offended.

6. An action becometh offensive when it stirreth corruption, wakeneth passion, or confirmeth jealousie and suspicion, &c. although that jealousie and suspicion be groundlesse. Thus Paul's taking of wages in the Church of corinth, had been offensive, because it had confirmed the suspicion of his seeking of himself amongst them, and would have strengthened his traducers in their calumnie, and given them occasion of venting their carnal cheerfulnesse and insolency; And thus, when one is unjustly suspected of errour or inclination thereto, to dispute for such things, even when he disowneth them, to converse with persons of that stamp, or such like, are offensive, and are to be shunned, though it may be there would be no such construction put upon another doing so.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning that upon which Offence worketh, or the feveral wayes by which it is taken.

The confidering of the second thing, to wit, that upon which Offence worketh, and by which

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which it is taken, will clear this more : For. fometimes. I. it affecteth the weaknesse of understanding and light; So, it raiseth doubts, misconstructions, &c. 2. Sometimes through that it affecteth the conscience; whence cometh judging and condemning of others, and their deeds, and the awakening of challenges, &c. 2. Somerimes it stirreth the affections, either by awakening carnal joy, or carnal grief. 4. It affecteth corruption, when men, from prejudice, are fretted or grieved upon such an occasion; Thus often deeds become offensive, when they confirm mens jealousie, stir their pride, emulation, &c. 5. A deed may have influence on some folks infirmity or impotencie; So, some that are more given to passion, suspicion, or such like, will be offended sooner than others, and some things will be offensive to them that are not fo in themselves. 6. Men as they are gracious may be offended; for, though grace, as fuch. is not capable finfully to take offence, yet gracious persons may offend, or some actions may have an aptitude to offend a gracious zealous person rather than another. Thus Peter's diffimulation might be faid to be offenfive to Paul, Gal. 2. though more properly it was a scandal to Barnabas, yet it grieved and stirred Paul, though in a fanctified manner he did vent that which possibly some other gracious person might elther have been irritated with, or, out of respect to Peter, led away, as Barnabas was; when an ungracious person would not have laid any weight on Peter's deed, as to any of these, that is, either to follow it, or be grieved with it.

From what is said, it may be someway clear how an indifferent or lawful act may become offensive, to wit, as it doth, or is apt to work any of these effects upon others, whether they be weak or strong, gracious or prophane, and whether conscience or corruption doth rise at the offence that is taken: for, as giving of offence, doth imply uncharitablenesse and pride to be in the giver, so that he neither loveth nor regardeth his brother as he ought to do, neither doth

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in this as he would have others do unto himself; So offence taken, doth imply corruption and infirmity, (at the best) to be in him that taketh it; and therefore in this matter of offence, respect would be had to the infirmity and corruption of others, as well as to their graciousnesse and affection. The not observing of which, maketh us take liberty in giving offence to many, because we do either esteem them to be wicked and prophane, or not affectionat to us, or, at the best, weak; and therefore not much to be regarded whether they be facisfied or not with our practices, which doth evidently shew, that there is despising and uncharitablenesse in the heart, when there is this regardlesnesse in our practice, as may be gathered from Rom. 14. ver. 2, 10, and 15.

CHAP. V.

Concerning what ought to make men loath and wary as to the giving Offence.

O come now to confider those things which ought to make men tender in this, we will find, first, that there is not any duty in the matter thereof more commanded than this of giving no offence, nor any fin more condemned than untendernesse in this, as we may find from the Epiftles to the Romans, Corinthians, &c. wherein whole chapters are spent on this subject : Yea, Act. 15. The Apostles and Elders thought the regulating of indifferent things for preventing of fcandal, worthy to be enacted in the first Synod and Council. Secondly, There is no fin that hath moe woes pronounced against it, the Lord Himfelf denounceth and doubleth a wo against it, Matth. 18. 7. and the Apostle confirmeth it, Rom. 14. 20, &c. Thirdly, The hatefulnesse of it may appear in the rise thereof, it being, s, in evident fign of dif-respect to God, and want of the impression of His dread, 2. of inward pride and felf-conceitednesse, 3. of uncharitablenesse and regardleshesse of others, and setting

them

themat nought, which may be gathered from Roma 14. 1 Cor. 8, and 10. and can there be any thing more to be shunned than these? And upon this we will find that men are tender and conscientious in the marter of offence, and the use of their christian liberty. as they are tender or untender in the material duties of Religion towards God, and towards others. Fourth-There can be no worse effects than follow upon this, It bringeth a we to the world, and is in Christ's account a most grievous plague when abounding; for, it hath destruction with it to many louls, Rom. 14.20. It bringeth reproach upon the profession of Christianity, cooleth love among brethren, begetteth and foftereth contention and firife, marreth the progresse of the Gospel, and, in a word, maketh iniquity to abound, and often in particular, ushereth-inerror into the Church, which may be gathered from the places cited, and from Matth. 24. 10, 11, 12. And we suppose when it is tried, it will be found, that untendernesse in the matter of scandal, hath been as prejudicial to the Church of Christ in respect of her outward beauty and peace, and the inward thriving of her members, as either errour, or prophanity, which have been but the product of this. Fifthly, Untendernesse in this, openeth a door to all untendernesse in the person that give th offence, because by it the conscience becometh lesse sensible of challenges, and so he hath the greater boldnesse to do things that are marerially evil; by this also he becometh habitually regardlesse of others: And although where respect to others is predominant, it be no good principle; yet often hath it great influence in reftraining men from loofnesse, and in its own place ought to have weight. And doth not experience teach, that once liberty being taken in this, even things materially finful do often follow ? Sixthly, Tendernefie in this adorneth the Gospel exceedingly, convinceth those we live among, entertaineth charity, and warmeth love, even as carelesnesse in this doth open mens mouthes, and make both profession and professors a reproach. Seventhly, D 4

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venthly, Untendernesse as to offences, striketh at the root of Christian communion: there can be no freedom in admonitions, little in conferences, and, it may be, no greatfervour in prayers with, and for others, where these abound; And is it possible that Religion can be well where these are? And may it not from these appear why Christ hath said, wo to that man by whom offences come?

CHAP. VI

Holding farth the difficulty to lye mainly in practice, and shewing how far Offence ought to have influence on a Christian in his walk.

He greatest difficulty is in reference to practice;

I (for Scandal cannot but be accounted abornimable) We shall therefore answer some Questions for
the clearing of this. I. It may be questioned, How
far offence ought to have influence on a Christian in
his walk? In answering of it, we would, I. consider
the matter in which offence may be given or taken.
2. The persons who may be offended. For, some
things in the matter are simply sinful, some things
are necessary duries; some things, again, are in themselves indifferent: So some persons are gracious and
tender, some are prophane and malicious, &c. We
answer therefore in these Assertions,

1. For no offence whatloever should mensorbear a necessary duty, or committany thing which ismaterially sinful. Christ would needs go up to Jerusatem, although His Disciples were displeased, and would continue in preaching the Gospel, and in doing what was intrusted to Him, although the Pharisees were offended, Matth. 15. This is clear: For no evil should be

done that good may come of it, Rom. 2.

great respect had to offence, and men ought to be swayed accordingly in their practice, as the former reasons clear; As, first, If the matter be of light con-

cernment

ceroment in it felf, as how mens geftures are in their walking, (suppose in walking fostly, or quickly, with cloak or without) men ought to do, or abstain as may prevent the conftruction of pride, lightnesse, &c. or give occasion to others in any of these; of such fore are falutations in the very manner of them: of this fort was womens praying with their head uncovered amongst the Corinthians, it being then taken for an evil fign; yet, if it be necessary, there is nothing little, as Moses will not leave an hoof, Exod. 10. nor Mordecai bow his knee to Haman, because that it looked like fauning on an accurred enemy : Of this fort also are offences in the fashions of cloathes, some mens wearing of ribbands, and fuch like, which being of imall concernment, ought certainly to be regulated by offence. Secondly, If it be indifferent, that is, in the marter thereof, fuch as may be done, or forborn; as cating or not reating fuch a meat for fuch a time, for although no action is indifferent when it is done, because the circumstances of end, morive and manner; do determine them either to be good or bad, as they are agreeable or disagreeable to the Law when they are done, yet some actions in themselves are such) in these actions a Christian ought to do or abstain accordingly, as his doing or not doing may edifie or give offence; yea, in such things he may be for ever restrained, according to that word of Paul's 1 Con. 8. 13. I bad rather not eat flesh while the world fandeth, than by my meat make my brother to offend. This is to become all things to all men for their gaining, I Cor. 9. when our practice in fuch things is conformed to others edification rather than our own inclination or light; And thus many things, which we are perfwaded are lawful, and that we defire to do, are to be forborn out of conscience, conscience, I say, nor our own, but of some others that have not such clearnesse, as 1 Cor. 10. 28. 29. Thirdy, Impositive duties of worthip and things that are necessary affirmative precepts, Seandal ought to have weight to time them fo as not to give offence by them. For, although

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though a Scandal cannot make duty to be no duty for ever, yet it may for a time suspend one from the exercife of a lawful dury, although not alwayes: Thus to give alms, is a commanded dury, yet if there be hazard that an indigent person may abuse it, or others may take offence by that example either oftentatively in a felfie way to give, or to account fo of him that doth give, or such like, in that case giving of alms is for that time to be forborn, except the persons strait make it necessary, or some other circumstance, and a private way afterward is to be taken: So, preaching to a Minister, and hearing to a professour, are commanded duties, Yet supposing that a particular mans preaching at fuch a time, would flumble more than edifie, it is be forborn. So in giving of admonitions, or in correcting of children, we are not to do these when we, or others, are in passion, although they be duties, but to take a fir time, lest more hurt follow than advantage: That being a rule anent affirmative precepts, that they bind continually (or femper) but not alway to the actual performing of them, (or ad semper) Thus a servant, or wife or any other person are bound to pray alwayes, yet to do it then when the mafter, husband, or family calleth-for some other thing necessary, would be an offence. Fourthly, In necessary things, offence ought to have weight: according to the circumstantiat case, to sway one in the manner and circumstances of that necessary duty; Thus, supposing it necessary to pray, a man is to choose the place and posture of praying accordingly; Thus it is offenfive in some cases to pray so as we may be observed, because that looketh hypocris tical like, and is condemned, Matth. 6. Sometimes again, it is offenfive not to be known to pray, as was in Daniel's case, Dan. 6. because his not evidencing of it by opening of his windows, had looked like his receding from his former piery, &c. And in this respect, what is offensive at one time, may be edifying at another, And what is edifying now, may become offenfive afterward upon another occasion, As by Pank's circumciting

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circumcifing of Timothy, and refusing to circumcife Titus, doth appear. So sometimes (suppose it when Nebemiah is flanding before the King) to kneel down to pray, would have been offenfive; at other times for a man to pray and not to kneel in his chamber. (as in Daniels case) may be offensive also. And in this fort of offence, custom guideth much in the indifferent circumstances; and alteration in these, is often offensive. Fifthly, In our particulars, in temporal things we ought rather to cede in what is our own, than to offend others, and mar their spiritual good. Thus Christ condescended to quit His priviledge, Matth. 17. 27. rather than to offend, And thus Paul shunned the taking of wages in Corinth, although he had right thereto, and did even then take from other Churches: The reason is, because the spiritual edification of our brother is of more value than our temporal right; much more is this to have influence in limiting and hedging us up from lawful pleasures and contentments, or what our inclination and affection leadeth to, even though it be lawful, if to be the following thereof may be an offence to any. It is for this also that Paul, I Cor. 6. condemneth their contentious going to Law before Infidels, because of the scandal thereof, And why (saith he) do ye not rather suffer wrong? Our Lord also, as was just now hinted. went before us in this, Matth. 17. 27. when He payed Tribute, and in that ceded His own right, left He should offend; and it's like they were not of the most tender men.

3. Affert. We say that there is equal respect to be had to all kind of persons in the giving of offence, if the matter be equal, that is, we ought to shun the offence of the weak as well as of the strong, of the prophane as of the gracious, &c. For, 1. the command is general, 1 Cor. 10. 32. Give no offence, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God, under which three, all sorts of persons are comprehended. 2. As we ought not to sin in reference to any person, so ought we not to give to any of them an occasion of sinning, be-

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cause that is never good. 3. If we look to the good or firong, as we ought not to do any thing that is finful to please them or abstain from any thing that is necessary to prevent their offence; So ought we to do in reference to the weak and prophane. Thus Paul would not give the false teachers of corinth ground of stambling more than the Church-members; And in this respect we are debtors both to the lews and Greeks, to the unwife as to the wife, Ro. 1.14. Yea, we are in indifferent things to become all things to all men, even to those that are weak and without Law (though still we are to be under the Law) that the moe may be gained, 1 Cor. 9. 20, 21, &c.

CHAP. VII.

Shewing what the Scandal of the Pharifees or malicious is, and clearing several other important Questions.

TF it be faid. What then is it which is called the Scandal of the Pharifees or the malicious, which ought not to be respected? We answer, 1. In constructing any maliciously to take offence, there is great need of spiritualnesse, lest we account men malicious because of some particular difference from us, or some other persons; even as from David's imprecations against his malicious enemies, we would not draw an example for regulating of our prayers, in reference to our enemies. 2. There is need also here to take heed what spirit we be of in our accounting men to be fuch, as the Lord faid to the Disciples, Lak. 9. when they pretended Elias example : for, to make a man malicious in taking offence in this respect, so as not to be regarded. I. It must be a necessary duty that he. offendeth at, even the best, as the Pharisees did at Christ's preaching of the Gospel. 2. It must not be out of ignorance or weaknesse that this offence is taken. 2. It must not arise from any personal or particular account, but from a man's being inftrumental in furthering and advancing the Gospel, and so must

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If it be yet faid, that they do not fland to offend us, therefore they are not to be regarded by us, when when men the thing we do is lawful. Aniw. This were to ren- stand not to der evil for evil, whenas we should overcome evil offend us? with good; and if it be a fin in them not to care for us in their practices, can it be otherwise in us? and our meeting of them in their untender way, is to harden them in it, and bring their bloud on our own head, whereas more tender dealing might edifie them, and, as by heaping coals of fire upon their heads, foften

them and make them more pliable.

If it be asked further, what one is to do in such a case when the matter is lawful, and it be withall doubtful whether it can be offensive or scandalous to any? Answ. 1. Beside the consideration of the thing, we would also consider circumstances of time, person, occasion, &c. 2. We would try what an action, fo circumftantiated, hath formerly been thought of in the case of others in former times; Yea, 2. what use to be our own thoughts of such actions in other persons, if we have not counted them offenfive in them? for often men more impartially judge? especially of what is offensive, in the persons of others than in themselves. 4. The conscience would be reflected on what it faith; for often there is a murmuring in the conscience, which sheweth its suspicion, that such a thing is offensive and hurtful, before it be acted, which is yet often born down by the imperuousnesse of mens inclination. 5. Others that may be more impartial, would be tryed; yea, the thoughts of these that we supposed to be the least tender of us are not to be neglected, for often they are most impartial in judging what is offensive. These things may have the more weight to fway one in their determination, because the trial runneth not to know what is duty, or lawful in it felf, but whether or not fuch a lawful practice may be done or for born withwhat.

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out wronging the spiritual estate of any. 6. If it continue yet doubtful whether it be offenfive or not. the same rule is to be followed, as if it were doubted whether it were lawful or not? to wit, It is to be abstained from because as he that doubteth of the lawfulnesse of a thing, cannot do it in faith, because he knoweth not but it may be finful; So neither can he that doubteth whether a lawful thing be expedient or not, do it with perswasion, because he knoweth not but it may be scandalous to some, and so cannot but be finful to him. Laftly, pains would be taken rightly to inform others, and to rectifie them that they may not take offence at things lawful in themsclves.

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If it be said, that sufficient pains have been taken to inform them already, and that therefore their pains bave taking offence is inexcusable. Answ. 1. Men would bebeen taken ware of making this an excuse, for many have great to inform? ignorance and are not foon capable of instruction, others have prejudice which is hardly rooted-out; Therefore I conceive it will not be easie to be able to affert an exoneration in this case. 2. If the thing continue to be indifferent (which is the matter concerning which the question is) there can be no terme fet to it : It is the Apostle's word, I Cor. 8. 13. If meat make my brother to offend, I will not eat flesh while the world standeth. If the case alter and the matter become necessary by some circumstances, as Daniel'e opening of his window did, then that which formerly was indifferent, becometh necessary, and it would be offenfive to omit it.

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What to be It may be further asked, What is to be done where done when there is a real difference betwixt parties, suppose for there is a a civil interest? for, a man, by seeking his own, may real diffe- irritate another, and, Is there a necessity of abstaining in that case? Answ. 1. There is no question but in ewixt par- some cases a man is to cede in his particular right, raties, upon ther than to give offence by a legal pursuit, as when account of it may occasion the Gospel to be evil spoken of, and a civil in- harden corrupt men in their harred of the fame. this

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Part r. 6. If it or not. oubted is to be of the because her can pedient noweth cannot e taken m that themn taken their uld bee great uction, d-out ; be able e thing er conterme . 13. I while ter beaniele rmerly ould be where ofe for n, may taining but 10

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this ground, I cor. 6: the Apostle condemneth their going to Law before infidel Judges, and doth exprefly fay, ver. 7. Why do ye not rather take the wrong? and suffer your selves to be defrauded? And though the cale now be not every way the fame, yet we suppose Christians ought to lay weight on this, lest in their purfults they give occasion to make the profesiors of the Gospel to be accounted contentious, covetous, &c. And therefore it would feem, that when they contend for civil things, it would be for fomething of moment at least to the person, which also is clearly, or may be made appear to be clearly theirs, and that after friendly wayes are essayed for attaining satisfaction. 2. We say, it ought to sway Christians in their manner of pursuing differences, so as there be not hear, pattion, carnalneffe, over-reaching and going beyond one another, nay nor the appearance of thefe to be feen in their carriage, but still following a civil difference, with respect to the spiritual good of the adversary, and that in such a manner as may be convincingly evidencing thereof both to him and others. 3. We fay, that these cautions being observed, this doctrine of Scandal will not fimply bind up a Christian from pursuing of a civil difference, because, in some respect, it may be a necessary dutie or a man to recover his own in a legal way, as it is for a man to labour, and otherwise by lawful means to provide for his Family: for which end God hath appointed Judges and Magistrates to hear complaints, and to reclifie wrongs; and to hear complaints is a main part of their duty, without which hum ne fociety would turnlike to the fishes of the lea, H.b. 1. Therefore we would distinguish here betwixt displeasing, yea angering and offending, and would defire rather not to stumble than to please; for there may be anger when there is no offence given, as suppose one should fret because they get not their will vented unjustly on some other in their person or estate. In that case, their fatisfaction is not their edification, nor their difpleasing their offence; So is it in this case, where a

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man pursues his own in a due manner, there is no just ground of offence given: because, I. The thing it felf is neither evil, nor bath the appearance of evil, but hath an approbation from God who hath appointed Magistrates for that end to hear and redresse wrongs, and cannot but be approven by others; yea, the deed it self cannot but be approven in the conscience of him that is offended, feing it is raught to men by nature to keep themselves from injury, and it is not in things fo clearly approven by God, and taught by nature, that offence is given, but where the action is doubted in conscience to be unlawful, at least, as so circumstantiat, which cannot be in this case. 2. It is no offence to complain to a Church-judicatorie of one that offendeth, if it be done in a right manner, though it anger him, because it is a legal allowed way, 3. To condemn this, Therefore neither is it so here. were really to offend many, even those, who from their covetous and malicious humour might clearly be emboldned to wrong others; wherefore we fee Paul and others do approve legal defences for preventing or remedying of hurt, though, no question, malicious opposers were fretted therewith. Yet where two are Ministers, or eminent in profession, we suppose there ought to be more warrinesse, because so necessarily it is implyed, that the one hath the wrong fide, which cannot but offend.

what, when the comthe comtherefeems to be an opposition betwirt the command
mands of of a Superiour, and the eschewing of offence, so that
Magistrates we must either disobey him or give offence in obeyand offence ing, as suppose a Magistrate should command to
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lawful upon the matter, but the doing of it is offensive, either by grieving many, or strengthening others
in the esteeming somewhat of that day?

Answ. In

that case, the Scandal is still active and given, and therefore no command or authority can warrand one in such a deed: for, as these two worthy Divines (Ames in his Cases of Conscience, lib. 5. cap. 11. and

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Gillespiein his Dispute of Ceremonies, chap. 7. sett. 5.) observe, no man can command either our charity or our consciences, or make up the hazard of a given offence; and therefore none can command us warrantably to hurt the spiritual good of our neighbour, that being contrary to the command of love that God hath laid on. And we may add, that an indifferent action, being involved with offence, cannot but be in its practifing finful as it is complexly confidered, and therefore cannot be the object of a Magistrates command more than an action that is finful in it felf-On this ground, many of the Saints in the last persecution, did choose rather to suffer Martyrdom, than to be constructed to have ceded, or delivered the Bible. and therefore they would not redeem their life by giving of any piece of paper at the command of the Officers, left thereby they should have been by others interpreted to have given up their Bible. It is to be remembred that we spake not of displeasing, seing by a Superiours command that may be done, but of Scandalizing, either by strengthening somewhat that is wrong, or feeming to do fo, by wounding the consciences of others, provoking them to judge us, or fome such way: And if it were not so, the three children. Dan. 2. might have escaped the furnace: for, to fall down at the Kings command, was not fimply finful(and had they done that, no more had been called for)but to fall down at such a time, in such place, &c. had at least the appearance of evil, and therefore there was no room left for obedience. And, no question, Joabs resisting, and in part neglecting of Davids command for numbering of the People, was more approvable than his obedience, yet was the thing lawful in it self; but confidering it as circumstantiat, it tended to foster Davids pride, and to be subservient in that which brought on wrath, Therefore was not to be obeyed to the confirming of him in his fin. The same also may be said, when doing something that is offenfive may feem a way to prevent a crosse; for, active offence being ever finful in respect of the complex

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case, it is not to be allowed whatever peril follow, as we may see in Daniels case who would not stumble others by shutting of his window, although it hazarded his own life, and the welfare of the hearers: And in this case Paul saith that it were better for him to dy than that any should make his glorying vold, or make him an occasion for others to stumble upon, I Cor. 9. 15. &c.

what is to be done in a case when offence is like to sollow on either side.

It may be faid, that sometimes the case is so stated. that whatever be done there will be offence, as if Paul take wages, he is called a felf feeker, that is, one that maketh gain of preaching the Gospel, if he forbear, it is faid he loveth not the Corinthians, & therefore he taketh not from them; again, some weak lews are ready to stumble, and not receive the Gospel if he circumcife not Timothy; others again, are readie to take advantage and to plead the necessity of the ceremonial Law if he circumcife Titus: It may be asked, what is to be done in such cases? In reference to which we 1. That we would ever look what is most expedient as to edification, it is like it did displease Peter and the Jews more that he did not circumcife Titus, and the false Apostles that he did not take wages, than if he had done it, yet he did what was most edifying, and of it self aprest to further their spiritual good; and a spiritual discerner will readily find what is most edifying in it felf, or in that case, which is to be followed, although it may be most displeasing. 2. Respect would be had to these that are most unbyassed; prejudice possessed the Jews and these corrupt Teachers, and therefore whatever Paul did they flumbled at it; but it is like he had respect to others, and did what might most wipe away the calumnies that were cast upon him and the Gospel by there false Apostles. 3. In such a case, a man would look to what is most denyed like, and it is ever fafest to sway to that hand, as suppose a man were in hazard upon one fide to be thought negligent, if he be nor painful, and even someway rigorous in his dealings with men, as on the other fide, coverous, if he be bu

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A Treatife concerning SCANDAL Part I. but painful. It is fafeft to hazard upon diligence without rigidity, although it should occasion him to be accounted negligent : Because there is least selfnesse on that fide, and that hath least to commend it unto mens corruptions. Thus Paul rather hazardeth upon what might follow upon his refusing to take wages than to take them, because taking is of it self more apt to give offence than refusing, and doth not look to fingle like, and there is not to eafie accesse to vindicat that against clamorous mouths. the offence seemeth to follow both from omitting and committing, Paul chooseth often to commend forbearance, as in the cases of forbearing to ear meats, and to take wages, at least, in Corinth, seeing he was otherwise supplied. So, when there is hazard of being accounted proud on the one fide, if men take fo and so on them, or live in such and such a rank, on the other fide, they may be accounted filly, and of no fpirit, if they be short of that; it is yet safest to eschew what may look like oftentation, because the tentation of felf-feeking lyeth nearest that. 5. The prefent state of the time, and the temper of those we live among, would be observed; as sometimes folks are ready to count an indifferent thing necessary, then it is to be abstained from; Therefore Paul would not circumcife Titus: Sometimes again, the omitting of an indifferent thing may feem to import the condemning of some necessary duty, and therefore Daniel will not forbear his ordinary circumstances in prayer: thus it is to be observed, to what side (to speak so) the tide of offence doth run, and that is to be shuned. 6. The nature of the persons is to be observed, which we have to do with in the mentioned case. Some are weak, So condescending edifieth them, and grieving of them might flumble them at the Gospel; others are perverse, and condescending to them, strengthneth them in their opposition, and so proveth a stumbling to them. Upon this ground, circumcifing of Timothy to the weak at one time is edifying, and forbearing thereof had been a stumbling-block: at an other time.

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& to other persons circumcifing had been an offence, as in the case of Titus inftanced; and Paul's refusing to circumcife him, was not that he regarded not their flumbling, but that he knew the circumcifing of him would puffe them up and strengthen them, and so flumble them indeed, therefore he would not do it.

What, when If it be asked, what if the case stand so stated, that dodoing will ing will offend the weak and tender, no doing will difoffend the please and irritate the perverse? As suppose in the case

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meak and of eating things facrificed to Idols?or contrarily doing tender, and offendeth the groffe, and no doing the tender, what irritate the is to be done in such a case? Answ. As there is never perverse, & a necessity of finning, so there is never a necessity that one should fall in an active offence, the offence therefore upon the one fide must be taken, and that is not to be regarded in comparison of the other, pole in some cases the weak be really offended, and the perverse are but irritated, in that case their irritation is not to be flood upon: for often they are really edified when they are diffatisfied, as in the instance proposed; cating of things facrificed to Idols, was really offensive to the Godly, as being ready to draw them to fin , but though it might possibly displease others that the Believers did not eat with them, yet was there nothing in that deed of it self apt to stumble them, and induce them to fin; Again, sometimes the Godly are displeased, and the perverse and profane are really flumbled, as when Paul refused to circumcife Titus, it is like his not doing thereof did really displease many godly Jews that were zealous in the Law, yet his doing of that had really been a flumbling to many corrupt Teachers who did teach the necessity of circumcision, and would have been confirmed by that practice. Therefore Paul will rather displease the godly Jews than stumble the profane Teachers by a deed which had also been a reall flumbling unto the Jews. This then is the first rule to wit, that we would look well upon what fide the active offence lieth, and upon what fide the displeaa gro fure only, and to choose the eschewing of offence, who CVCI

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ever be displeased. 2. When the thing is in it self indifferent to be done, or not to be done, it is fafest to forbear whoever be displeased, as wee see in the instances given, Paul inclineth still to forbearance, he forbore to eat flesh, and to circumcife Titus, and to take wages,&c. when the case is so stated, because whoever be displeased, that is not of it self so inductive to fin, as doing is, Which either doth strengthen others to do doubtingly upon our example, or to judge us for doing what they account finful, or some such like. Indeed, in some, cases where there is no hazard of Offending by doing, we may do what is indifferent to prevent the irritating of any, that to there may be the greater accesse to edifie them: And therefore, Att. 16. 2. Paul will circumcife Timothy, left he make himfelf ungracious to the Jews in those parts; yet, had there been any there to take advan age from that to confirm their errour, he had not done it, as in the other instance of Titus doth appear; for so it had not been an offence, but somewhat which was displeasing to those Jews. Yet, 3. supposing it to be so, that neither have ground but both may be displeased, Then the tender are to be respected, and the preventing their offence is to be preferred. 1. Because they are displeased out of conscience, and that is wounded; others are but irritat in respect of some lust, and so it is displeasure fimply to them, but it's offence to the other, because on a ground of conscience they are displeased. 2. The Lord is most tender in the grieving. or not grieving of the godly (as is clear Matth. 18,) Therefore ought we to be so also. Hence the Prophet professeth, 2Kiz. 3. 14. that had it not been respect to Jehojaphat, he had not stood much on the displeasing of others; or, suppose some prophane person should be displeased, because a man doth not drink so much, (although it be not inconfistent with moderation) and suppose some tender person should think his drinking thereof inconfistent with sobriery, I say, in that case he should respect the last, because this offence doth flow from a ground of conscience. Lastly, it would be looked

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to in such a case, what may be most in the upshot of event for edification, supposing there should be involvements on all hands; for some things being compared may be better discerned, than when they are abstractly considered in themselves; Now, edification and offence do never lie upon one side: therefore if it be found that such a thing comparatively be edifying, it is to be done, and what seemeth to oppose it, is not to be accounted offence.

CHAP. VIII.

Holding forth what is called-for when Offences abound.

If may be profitable to enquire what is called for from a Christian living in the time when offences abound, and when there is too great a readinesse both to give and take offence? Answ. It is hardly possible to condescend on all particulars here; yet because the thing is useful, and the Scripture is sull in reference to this matter, in the sourceenth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in both the Epistles to the Corinthians, and elsewhere, We may hazard to pro-

pose these general directions.

1. A man would not only respect his own clearnesse in conscience as to the lawfulnesse of a deed, but would even have respect to the satisfaction of the consciences of others, as it is, I cor. 10.29. The negled of this caffeth a door open to many evils; and did this abound, that men were burning with any offence taken by others, as was Pauls case, 2 Cor. 11. 29. there would be fewer offences given. It ought to affect us, as it were a pang or flound at our hearts, to hear or fee of any that are offended. This is a principal remedy from an inward sympathic to study this and there will be directions furnished where that touch is, who is week, and I am not week? who is offended, and I burn not? Sooner would we put our head in the fire than hazard to offend any, if this were 2. As men would be careful not to give offence, fo allq

also not to take offence, or to stumble even when blocks are cast in the way. It is a piece of our folly fomerimes to be exclaiming against the frequencie of offences and the givers of them, and yet not to be adverting, but to be stumbling at these ourselves; either by waxing cold in our love to the Godly, or faint in duties, or ready to take liberty to speak and to judge of others, even of their state that we offend at, or possionately to be irritate to some carnal revenge, &c. for, feldom are many offences given actively, but many also are offended passively, as Matth. 24. 10. and at fuch time, they are bleffed who are not offended in Christ, it being both a good thing, and a rare thing in such a case, Matth. 11. 6. for, as it is in carnal contests, often an ill reply bringeth on more finful contention; so it is here: And offence taken by one, leadeth him to give another, as the refult of that, whereas were it our care not to flumble, our selves, we might be keeped from giving occasion of that to others, and brook much more peace, as it is, Plal. 119.165. Great peace have they who love thy Law: and nothing shall offend them. Sometimes, again, the falls of others are matter of mocking and mirth, and we are puft up because of that, as if there were not fuch corruptions in us ? This was the Corinthians fault, I Cor. 5.2. and many other wayes are there of flumbling, and O but watchfulnesse is necessary when folks walk thus in the midft of snares, and are To ready to fall either upon one hand or another!

3. Folks would beware of despising or judging one another, but would by all means endeavour the entertaining and confirming of love, which is in this respect the bond of persection. The Apostle giveth this direction, Rom. 14. 3. Let not him that eateth, de. spife him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth. He that eateth is the strong profellor, who is through in the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong; It is the fault of fuch readily to condemn and despile the weaker who cannot go alongst with them. Again, he that eateth not,

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Part w is the weak, who, wanting clearnesse in what the other is clear of, is ready to judge the other as an untender person, because he doth what he cannot do. These evils are rife where offences abound, and are the oyl which nourisheth them: for if there were not pride and despising in some, and untendernesse and rash judging and jealousies in others that are weak, the plague that followeth offences would not be so great in the world. But these two are most directly opposit to the rule of charity that ought to be amongst Christians, both in guiding us in doing of our own acts, and in constructing and judging of the actions of others. And, in a word, love, that is the fulfilling of the Law, is the fulfilling of this pre-

abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of Stumbling in him. Offences could neither be given nor taken if love to our brethren were fresh.

cept also. See 1 Joh. 2.10. He that loveth his brother

4 We would beware of moving or foftering needlesse and perplexed disputings, these have ever proved exceeding hurtful to the Church, and proportionally wronged edification, as errour and prohanity have done. It is the Apostle's first direction, Rom. 14.1. Him that is weak receive, but not to doubtfull disputations; for such breed strife, and often waken carnalnesse in the contenders rather than pure zeal. And in this case, it is better for some to possesse clearnesse in their own judgment, and to condescend in their practice to others, than by venting their judgment unfeafonably, to confound others, that is the meaning of the word, Rom. 14.22. Hast thou faith? that is, clearnesse in such a particular, have it to thy felf, that is, make your own private use of it without troubling others with the same. And we will fee, that this spirit of contention, and the abounding of offences, have ever been together in the Church. For certainly such contentions cannot but obstruct the growth of the weak, and grieve the firong, and stumble all. We conceive therefore, that at such a time it were more fafe to abitain the wakening of new debates,

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debates, raifing of old, or using of new expressions; than to hazard upon the offence which may follow upon mens mistaking of them, or taking advantage by them, which will be more hurtful than any advantage they can bring. We conceive also that it were fitter to overlook some mistakes in some Writings at such a time, than unnecessarily to table a debate on every thing that seemeth dissatisfying in the writings and expressions of others, which is become too common, and by this, professed enemies are let alone and have peace, and all the debates in the Church, are almost amongst men that agree in sundamentals, because of some lesser differences.

5. There would be an abstinence from things that are controverted either in doctrine or practice, if they be not necessary things: As we see the Apostle doth in the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians. The reason is, because it is the strong who are clear to do, and it's the weak who are doubtful. Now, it is more just and safe, that the strong should condescend to the weak, because that is within their reach, than that the weak should be driven up to the strong.

which were to overdrive them.

6. At such a time folks would be much in the fludy and practice of the more necessary and material things, which come nearer the life and power of godlinesse. We see, when offences abounded in the primitive times, the Apostle withdraweth them from too much seriousuesse in more circumstantial things, to the working out of their salvation in fear and trembling, Philip. 2.12. for, experience telleth us, that offences rise most, yea cannot rise, but in things which may be done or forborn, as in eating, and such other things as troubled the primitive Church. We see also, that where there is most heat in these things, there is an overvaluing of them, and an undervaluing of faith, repentance, prayer, communion with God, &c. Hence it is, (Rom. 14. 17.) that the Apostle correcteth this fault, laying, The Kingdom of Heaven (which is the Gospel in its power 1

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doth not confist in meat and drink, that is, in the eating of, or abstaining from, such meats as were then disputable, much less in the disputes hat were concerning them; but it consistent in righteousnesse, peace and joy in the holy Ghost, that is, in material duties. Therefore he addeth, that he that serveth God in these (that is, righteousnesse and peace and the more material things) is accepted of God, and approved of men. Which sheweth, that they placed too much of religion in these extrinsick things, and in the mean time slighted the main. For, in necessary things there is no hazard of offending, and sew usually offend at these.

7. At such a time great care would be had to entertain peace. even publick Church-peace, and respect to the Ordinances, particularly to that of Discipline, because that is the Proper remedy for removing offences, Matth. 18. 17. and without unity this hath no weight. Also offences of their own nature tend to make rents, and where unity is preserved many are keeped on their feet which otherwayes would have fallen. Therefore, Rom. 14. 19. that direction is given. Let us follow those things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edific another. And often union and edification are joyned together which sheweth, that it must be a great restraint to offences, which are so opposit to edification.

8, When offences abound, it is often most safe to be least appearing, except a mans call be the more clear and convincing: For, as in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, So in much medling there wanteth not offence. This is also clear in experience, because offences come more ordinarily, and are more observed when something is done, than when something is forborn. Yet this is not to be extended to the omission of any necessary duty, but is to have great weight in indifferent things, that are not necessary, especially such as for the time are most ordinarily the stone of stumbling. Hence we find, that though in some questions the Apostle is full to dispute down adversaries.

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adversaries, as in the case of Justification; Yet there are some other things that he seeketh rather to have restrained than moved, such as he calleth doubtful, Rom. 14. 1. endlesse, I Tim. 1. 4. that gender strife, and are not edifying, but soolish and unlearned questions, 2 Tim. 2. 14, 16, 23. men are to slie, and to shun these, even when occasion is given. For, though every question hath a truth upon one side, and the searching into necessary truths he edifying, yet as to such, considering the contention that waiteth on them, and the difficulties that are about them, the same them as a such as the same than by too such as a s

fervent pursuing of them.

9. Men at such a time would be diligent in the duties of their stations, and keep themselves within thefe; and, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 7. 20. would abide in the calling wherein they are called: for, by fo doing there is no occasion of offence. When a Magistrate holdeth in the duties of a Magistrate, and Ministers, Masters, Servants, Husbands and Wives, and so all forts contain themselves within the bounds of their respective stations, that is a thing offensive to none; But when they exceed or give occafion to others to think that they exceed, then it becometh offensive, and maketh the Gospel to be evilspoken of. For which cause, the Apostle commendeth to Subjects, Wifes, Servants, and all forts, the doing of the duties of their respective stations, as that which doth adorn the Gospel, and stope the mouths of gainlayers.

condescending upon their side who are offended freely and soberly to admonish those by whom they are offended; and upon the otherside, a condescending to satisfie and remove any offence after taken by those who have given it, or at whom it is taken. This is our Lord's rule, Matth. 18. 15. Sec. There is nothing more needful, when offences abound, than these, and yet often there is little or no accesse to them, or practice of them when they are most need-

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full, And this maketh offences to abound the more And what thing is more unfuitable than for one to take or keep offence at another, & yet never to endeavour his recovery who hath offended, and by so doing to hazard both their souls? Or, when one hath given offence, and is admonished, to refuse to come out him-

felf, or to keep another out of this snare?

11. This endeavouring to have offence removed, ought to be followed convincingly, and that in the several steps laid down, Matth. 18. and if private reafoning and admonition prevail not, it is to proceed further till it come to the Church. But because the Scandal then becometh publick, we shall speak of it in the next branch. Only now it is to be adverted concerning these offences in reference to which we are to admonifi our brother, and thus to follow them in case of sleighting. I. They are not only wrongs done to the person immediatly or directly, but it may be his being stumbled at his seeing a mans miscarriages towards others, So the injury may be to one, but the offence to another. 2. This duty is to be gone about, not only without all heat, prejudice, or contention, but with the spirit of love, as a duty proceeding there from for his good, even from that same spirit by which we pray for him, they being both equally necessary duties. And, 3. That this Order of Christ's is not to be interverted by any, nor the publick gone to, till the private way be effectually effayed.

at such a time) to be single in our end, having the glory of God mainly in our eye. And that not only for our own peace, but also for the conviction of others. It is often our unsingleness that maketh us careless ingiving offence, and also the evidence or appearance of that, that maketh others readily to take offence at our carriage. Hence we see, that the actions of such who are supposed to be single, are not so readily stumbled at. And this direction is expressly laid down in reference to this end, I cor. 10.

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21. Whether therefore ye eat or ye drink, or whatever ye do. do all to the glory of God: give none offence neither to few nor Gentile, &c. It were fit therefore at fuch a time . that a man should examine his own breast. and try what leadeth him on such a design, or act; for often by-ends and motives will fteal in, when we feem to our felves to be most fervently zealous: felf-interests had need to be much denied in such a

12. Much care would be had to keep up the authority of all Christ's Ordinances; they are the lights and means whereby men are to be directed, left they flumble, and to be ftrengthned and comforted in their spiritual consolations: and hardly offences arise, but the Devil seeketh to discredit these, because then men are in the dark and so cannot but fall when blocks are in their way. Hence often are the Ordinances of life the very pretended rife of offences, as concerning a Ministery, Baptism, the Lords Supper, Sabbath Day, Singing of Pfalms, Constitution of a Church, Discipline, &c. because by making these to be flumbled at, or flones of flumbling, men can have accesse to no other means, either for direction or consolation. On this ground Paul endeavoureth so much to vindicate himself from what was imputed to him, 2 Cor. 12. 19. And for this end fo many directions are given for keeping up the credit of the ordinances in the most difficult dark cases, as Song 1.8. Eph. 4.12,13. Heb. 13.7,8, &c. & 17. especially Mat. 18. 17, 18, &c. And on the contrary, for eschewing corrupt teachers, and those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine learned,&c. Rom. 16. 17. Then it is a time to try the spirits, and to fear snares, and to hate every garment that is sported with the flesh; and we find in Scripture, and experience that ever these two go together, to wit, shunning of those who bring false doctrine, and the adhering to those who are faithful on the other side.

14. At such a time especially, Christians in their walk toward one another, ought to be of a sympa-

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thizing and condescending temper. This is to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves, but our neighbour for his good to edification even as Christ pleased not himself, &c. as the Apostle hath it to the same scope, Rom. 15.1,2,3. Tenaciousenesse and felf-willednesse do often breed offences, and continually stand in the way of removing of them, and although there is nothing more ordinary in a time of offences than that, to wit, for men to fland to their own judgement and opinion as if it were a piece of liberty and conscience, not to condescend in a thing that we judge lawful, yet is there nothing more unfuitable for Christians in such a time: for, as Solomon faith, Only by pride cometh contention , Prov- 13.10 So this felf-pleafing humour is the great fomenter of offences in the Church. This condescending was Paul's practice in this case, I Corinth. 9. ver. 19,20, &c. who became all things to all men, for their edification, being in the use of indifferent things so dependent upon the edification of others, and so denied to his own pleasing and inclination; yea, even to his own light, as if he had had none himself. And although this be incumbent to all Christians, yet these who are more eminent and ftrong, are especially called to this forbearance and condescending, as it is Rom. 15. 1. We then that are ftrong ought to bear, Grc. Gal.6.1,2. It is a great mistake in Religion, to think, that in indifferent circumstantial things, the weak should follow the strong, and upon that ground to undervalue the offending of them: It is quite contrary to Scripture, the strong are to carryto the weak as men do to brittle and weak vessels, using tendernesse to them lest they be crushed. What is said in all the directions, doth therefore specially concern the more strong Believers, that in these they may go before others.

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CHAP. IX.

Holding forth what ought to be the carriage of Ministers when Offences abound.

He last direction is that then Ministers in a special manner, are called to bestir themfelves for draining this torrent of Offences, even as they are to fet thenselves against the abounding of fins. And indeed we know no mean fitter and more comprehensive for this end, than that Ministers cordially interpose for the removing thereof. For, This is a special end for which they are given to the Church, as was formerly faid, and this is a special part of their charge, to watch over fouls in reference to this: Hence we see, that the Apostle Paul doth not infift more in his publick doctrine, or in his private carriage, upon any thing, than upon this, to wit, That the Church may be made and keeped free of offences. as what hath been observed from him out of the Epistles to the Romans, Corintbians, Galatians, &c. doth evince. Nor doth he with any kind of persons deal so much to restrain strifes, contentions, janglings about words, and fuch things which do gender offences, as in the Epiffles of Timothy and Titus, charging them, that not only in reference to their own carriage. but, as Ministers of the Gospel, they would endeavour this in their charges; and there can be no reason of this, but because the matter is of such concernment to the Church, and because they by their flations have a main influence either on the restraint or growth of scandals and offences. Yea, doth not the blessed Prince of Paffors Himfelt, often take notice of offences in His fermons? sometimes reproving them, sometimes shewing the ill of them, and often purposly infifting in instructions for this very end, that His Disciples should not be offended, as Joh. 16. 1. and in His practice, condescending to prevent the offence, even of carnal men, Matth. 17. 27. and doth much infift on that doctrine, giving directions for prevent-

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ing and removing thereof, Matth. 18. and particularly He giveth direction for the promoving of morrification, by cutting off the right hand, and plucking our the right eye, &c. which being given by the Lord, if well fludied and practifed, might be a compend of all other directions, it is so well chosen for that purpose, as all His directions were. All which sheweth, that when Offences abound, much doth ly upon Minifters at fuch a time, and that both in reference to their own personal carriage, and also in their ministerial flations; and in fum, in their whole walk, both amongst themselves, and towards others of all form, which we may hint at in some particular inflances As. I, that their conversations be then grave, sober. holy, denied, &c. and eminent in all that is called for from private Christians, at such a time. For, as their carriages are more observed than others, So do spots upon them more discernably appear, and when appearing, are more readie to flumble and harden others. It is for this, that a Minister is to shew himfelf a pattern and as a copie or example to the Believer. In word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, &c. as it is , I Tim. 4. 12. Upon this ground also are they at fuch a time to flee youthful lufts of contentions, firffe, and fuch like, even when thefe feem to follow them: and on the contrary, to purfue righteousnesse, faith, charity, peace, &c. even when these seem to flee from them, as it is, 27im.2.22. Both which places relate especially to perillous times, as the scope in the preceeding words doth hold forth. And if this be not in Ministers, what can be expected amongst the people, and without this, can their carriage or publick Miniftery have weight to this end? 2. Ministers would be watchful, not only over fins, but even over offences, yea, even over passive offences, left any by themselves, or any other be offended, which was our Lords way and the practice of the Apostles, as in the places 'cired: For to be offended, is an infirmity and ficknesse, even when the offence is meerly taken; and for a Minister not to be affected with that, doth hold forth

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a most umministerial cruel disposition; that is spoken of by the Apostle as a great part of the care of the Church, 2 Corinth. 11. 28, 29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not? The hearing of a persons stumbling, ought to stound and will found the heart of a sympathizing Minister, as if it And were this one thing were a fire in his bosome. in vigour, to wit, native sympathic with those that are offended, it would other in all other directions: This would makeMinisters pray much to have it prevented, as our Lord doth, Joh. 17. and Paul doth Rom. 15. 5. This would make Ministers sparing to give offence, or to laugh at the offences of others, or to despite and slieght those that are offended, much leffe to spead humors, entertain contentions, or to to aggrege milcarriages in others, as thereby the floud of offences may rather be increased than dried up by them. And it is found, that seldom offences have been in the Church, but Ministers have had a prime hand " erein , as if it had been a part of their duty to promie the fame: which fayeth, that especially they had need to be watchful at fuch a time. nisters would endeavour much unity amongst themselves, and unity amongst Professours. There is no keeping off of offences without this; for strife and contention are the fewel by which this plague of scandal is kindled and entertained, when offences are abounding in Corinth: it is the first direction that Paul giveth, I Epist. I chap. ver. 10. I befeech you, brethren. by the name of our Lord Jefus Christ, that ye all speak the fame things, that there be no divisions among you. Orc. And when he hath been large in two Epifiles, he doth almost close with this, 2 Epist. chap. 13.11. Finally, brethren, farewel: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of peace shall be with you. And he not only exhorteth to it. But Rom. 15. 5. he prayeth for it upon the back of all his doctrine and directions concerning offences; Yea, it was the way that our bleffed Lord Jesus took, to commend union, and to pray for it to His Disciples, left thereby

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thereby the world should be stumbled and keeped back from the acknowledging of Him, and the beanty of the Church should be obscured, so as the menbers thereof should not be known to be His Disciples. as may be at length feen in the Gospel, and particularly, Job. 17. 4. Ministers would study the diverting of people from these things which ordinarily breed offences, as striving about words, and jangling in controversies not material, the judging and condemning of others, and such like; and they would fludy to be occupied themselves, and to have others exercised in these things that come nearer the powerof Godlinesse and the life of Religion. We see when the rest of the Disciplesoffend at Zebedee's children for their suit, the Lord checks that, & proposeth to them the necessity of humility and mortification, and such like, that he might put the unprofitable queftion (who (hould be greatest?) out of their head, as it is in Matth. chap. 18. 1,&c. and chap. 20. ver. 20, and 25, &c. And this is frequent in Paul's Epiftles to Timothy and Tiths, whereas upon the one fide, he dehorteth from strife, contention, vain jangling, following of fables, & fuch like, So he doth, upon the other fide, exhort to the exercise of godlinesse, and to the pressing of good words, as good and profitable to men in opposition to these, as may be gathered from 1 Tim. chap. 1. ver. 4, 5. and chap. 4. ver. 7, 8. 2 Tim. chap. 2. ver. 14, 15, &c. Titus 3. ver. 8,9. Yea the Apoftle will have Ministers so serious in this, as to charge and obtest their hearers (as he did his, I Corinth. 1. 10. and Phil. 2.1.) to eschew these things, and not to strive about words, 1 Tim. 1.3,4. 2Tim. 2. 14, &c. Especially Ministers would beware of menrioning such things unnecessarily, as are the bone of contention or which may fofter miftakes of, or grudges, against others, or make themselves to appear to be carnal, and to walk like men, But rather they would endeavour to hush them to filence, as they would have blocks removed out of the peoples way, otherwise they cannot but lose of their ministerial authority, and discom pole

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fould be eichewed by them.

The confidering of three Scriptures will give a view of Paul's carriage in reference to this, And O how commendable is it ! The first is, 1 Corinth. 9. 19, 20. 21. 22, &c. Though I be free from all men, yet have I made my felf servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to corift) that I might gain them that are without Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means fave some. Where, his condescending to others, his infinuating by all means to win the affection of people, his greedinesse to edific and fave fouls, and his endeavouring by his own example to engage others to that same condescending way, are abundantly holden forth as an useful and excellent copie to be followed especially by Ministers, who should liudic edification at fuch a time most seriously.

The second is, 2Corinth. 6. from ver. 1, to ver. 11. It is a great word that he hath ver. 3. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministery be not blamed: (for untendernesse in offences maketh the Ministery obnoxious to contempt) Rut in all things approving our felves as the Ministers of God; that pointeth out a ministerial walk which studieth more the Masters honour. the credit of the Ordinances, and the good of fouls, both his own and others, than the pleafing of others, and the making themselves acceptable only as men, or as familiar companions to those they converse with. Then followeth, In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in strips, in imprisonment, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, infastings, By purenesse; by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindnesse, by the holy Ghoft, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousnelle, on

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A Tracin contenting SCANDAL

the right band, and on the left; By bonour and dishenour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true. As unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold, we live; as chafined, and not billed; As forrowful, yet alway rejoycing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Wherein, as in so many steps, he setteth forth his ministerial walk for the preventing of offence, being a most excellent description of a parient, diligent, saithful, denied, impartial, single, powerful preacher, driving and pressing the great design of Reconciliation, as his main scope, as from the close of the sormer Chapter, and the beginning of this, is clear. And this is pointed out as his work at such a time, amongst such a people for such an end, As the preventing of offence.

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The third Scipture is 2 Corintb. chap. 11. ver. 28, 20. which was formerly cired, and is worthy to be engraven on a Ministers heart. Beside that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? Never man was more ferious in quenching fire in his house than Paul was in removing of offences, and in recovering such as were offended. He was not only careful nor to give offence himfelf, nor only to keep others from giving offence, nor yet only for removing of fuch as were taken at himfelf; pay, nor only to fatisfie those that were strong that had offended, but the very flumbling, although without cause, of the most weak. ignorant, filly persons affected him more, than if it had peirced himself. It is not like that he could have continued carelesse of mens conftructions of him , of their being grieved and made weak, or of their being offended any other way, (as, alas, it is like too many do now!) It was no matter of laughing to him to hear of the fadnesse of any, that did proceed even from miftakes; and there was no rest in his mind till such an infirmity was cured. These three places and others, being loberly confidered in their matter and scope, will give the serious consciencious Minister infight in a great part of his duty, and

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and (it (it may be) in no litte part of his fin and challenge at fuch a time. The Notes also of the Reverend Matter Dickson upon the same subject, (worthy to be taken notice of) do more fully confirm this. Happy were the Ministers that were of such a frame and of such a practice; And happy were the Church under their inspection. O that it may once thus be!

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interpretation of the viction and be officed with

Concerning Publick Scandals, or Scandals as they are the object of Church-censures; and more particularly, as they are practical, or, in practice.

T resteth now that we should speak something of Scandal as it is the object of Church-discipline; Scandal as it is the object of Church-decipline; for that is implyed here, to wit, That this Scandal, given by the Nicolaitans, was fuch as ought to have been taken notice of by the Church-officers: for the neglect thereof is reproved by the Lord; and in such a case private admonitions are not sufficient. We may therefore speak a word to these Questions, 1. When a Scandal is to be efteemed publick that is to be taken notice of by a Church-judicatory 2. What Order is to be observed in proceeding therein. 3. What is to be accounted a sufficient ground for removing of such an offence, so as it may fift all ecclefiaftick Processe, or may remove a Sentence when it is passed. 4. What is the duty of private Christians, when Church-officers feem to be, and possibly indeed are, defective in reference to this?

CHAP

CHAR. L. WHELPINGS

shewing that every Offence is not publick, and when it is he.

Oncerning the first Question, we lay down these grounds, I. Every thing offensive is not publick, or immediately to be brought before a Church-judicatory. Of this fort are, 1. fins of infirmity, which possibly may be offensive for the time. Yet the persons way being considered they are to be thought to proceed from his infirmity, they being incident to such who are in some serious manner watchful over their way's and therefore are not the object of Discipline, which is to curb and restrain the more groffe humours of Profesiors; Otherwayes the exercise of Discipline, in reference to infirmicles. would utterly prove an intanglement both to Officers and Members, and so occasion more stumbling. contrary to Christ's scope. 2. Offences that are in disputable practices, or that flow from miscarriage in things indifferent, are not properly the object of Church-censure, because there is not solid accesse of through convincing the party. Hence we fee, that in these disputes concerning indifferent things, or of practices following thereupon, the Apostles reprove mens untendernesse in them, but do never make them the ground of Censure as such, except they be agureged by some other circumstance. Of this fort also the offences that may proceed from mens carriage in legal pursuits and civil contracts which may offend; yet cannot they be legally convinced to have broken a rule, when the strain of their way is legal; although it may be finful before God, and be to be reproved by private admonition where men have accelled 2. Some offences are groffe, and, it may be, known to some to be true; yet possible there is no convincing way of demonstrating the truth thereof to others: in that case, it's more safe and edifying to forbear publick mentioning of that scandal, than to procector are a solo fecute

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fecute the fame, feing it maymore irritate theperfon. and weaken the Church-authority, than edifie. A. Some fcandals are groffe, and may be made-out by two or three witnesses; yet are not immediately to be brought to publick, except upon the supposidon of following obstinacy, and no satisfying of those two or three, which especially is to be confidered, if the persons carriage be otherwayes cleanly. This is Christ's expresse rule, Mat. 18. and to bring it immediatly to publick, is not confiftent with that love that we ought to have to one another! For, charity requireth that he should be admonished, and also if he hear, that he should fift; Otherwayes, such being latisfied as were offended, it were to waken a feandal, and not to remove one. But now especially we confider what is a publick scandal in respect of its nature and afterward we shall enquire when it is to to be accounted publick in respect of its notority; and fo when immediatly it is to be brought in publick; for it is certain, that these two may be divided, and so are to be diffinguished, as was formerly hinted. For, s scandal may be publick, to say so, for its notority, but yet not for its nature,

2. Scandals may be of that nature, that it is fit when to take publick notice of them, and to follow them scandal with Church-censures till they be removed. This is tobebrought clear in the Lord's reproving the neglect of publick to publick. Censure in these Churches; for, His finding fault that they had such, and suffered such (as in the next Epifile)can be constructed no otherwayes, but that they did not by Church-censure cut them off from their fellowship, which is elsewhere abundantly clear. And it is true in these cases, 1. When a scandal is of its own nature groffe and infectious, like a little leaven ready to leaven the whole lump. 2. When it is clear and in the matter of fact cannot be denied: the first is requisit to a publick scandal for convincing of the conscience of the evil it self; the second for making application of the confequents of such an evil to luch a person. 3. An offence becometh pub-

lick, though it be not of its own name four first, 46 h be afterward aggreged by such circumstances as ob-Shacy and contempt of private admonition, frequen relapting therein, and fuch like, as Christs rule, Matth. 18. and the general nature of offence do confirm : Scandals that are to cleumftantiated they only, are to be taken notice of by Church judis catories as the proper object of Church-disciplina Hence we may see a great difference betwint offence as it is the object of private diferenion, and as it is the object of Church-discipline. I call them groff evils and of an infectious nature, which are again a clear Law ofGod, and of that influence in a man's christian walk, as any sober man, acquainted with the Word of God, and reflecting upon conscience, cannot but acknowledge to be finfull, obstructive to the work of grace where they are, and tending to the marring the Beauty of a Church, and the edification and falvation of her members if they should spread. fuch as Sabbath.breaking, fwearing, and what doth directly contradict a moral command, these things are obviously censurable. And upon this occasion, I cannot but much wonder at, and regrate the unwarrantable expressions, at least, in the manner of fact, of a Learned man, Mr. Baxter against Blake, pag. 130. his words are, In some Countries, where some oaths are grown customary and of no great evil repute, it is possible for a godly man to be long guilty of them, as it is known that many well reputed of for godlineffe are in Scotland, &c. where he doth mifrepresent the Church of Scotland in a twofold miftake (to fay no more.) 1. 45 if some swearing were so costomary in Scotland as to abound even amongst the Godly, 2. As if it were nor taken notice of or of no evil repute or fcandalous: It is like, this may be his information, but certainly Christian charity would have pleaded, that fuch information should not have been received against a Brother, without some convincing ground; much leffe to have been vented as a thing known against a Christian Church, which, however the be otherwise

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otherwise affiliated and rent, and so obnoxious to much contempt and reproach, yet hath a witnesse both in neaven and Earth of zeal against that fin, and inonocehcie in that respect, as to these that are Godly. even but feemingly, There being nothing more abhorred by a godly heart, and accounted a greater evidence of profanity amongst us, than customary irreverent medling with the holy Name of God, and (wearing of any kind : and although we be many waves guilty before God, even in this respect; yet we suppose the may hold up her face therein, beside,

and with, any Church on earth.

We fay, That even among these Scandals that are in this fense publickly to be taken notice of, there is many wayes difference to be made in the profecuting of them, and that in diverse respects. 1. Some frandals are of fuch groffe nature and publicknesse in the fact, that they cannot be passed without some publick rebuke; at least, even though the person should feen farisfyingly to refent his deed, because in this, respect is to be had to the edification of others, and nor of the person only. 2. Some scandals again are fuch, as by authoritative admonition may be helped: and in this fense, if a person hear the Church-guides and take their admonition, there is no further progreffe to be made. 'Again, 3. fomerimes persons, are to be followed with the highest censure of Excommumeation, when open rebukes cannot do the bufinfle, as we see in the case before us, and other practices of Pauls. And we suppose, that such a scandal as hath this Sentence following upon it, would be in the grofnesse of its nature, and clearnesse ofits proof, convincingly made out both to the person himself, and to others. Because; r. otherwise it may make this great Ordinance contemptible, if upon light, or disputable grounds, it be drawn forth. 2. Neither can it have weight with the person to gain its end upon him natively, as a Church-ordinance ought to have, the first step whereof is, convincingly to argue him to the fense of his fault, as the word is, Matth. 18.

where offences are publick, yet difference is to bemade.

2. Neither can it be expedied to have fuch weight with others who ordinarily carry towards them that are under it, as they are convinced of the weightinesse or lightnesse of the ground of that Sen tence. 4. The nature of this Ordinance cleareth this also; for (as Divines say) it is added to confirm Gods threatnings as Sacraments do feal the Promifes & then it importeth, that there must be a clear threatning ere this can be appended; and there can be no fuch threatning applyed, but where both the fin in its na ture, and the fact in its notority are convincing: an indeed all the precedents of this Sentence in Scripture are of this nature, to wit, they are both rare, and also upon most convincingly grosse evils. I cannot expresse it better than it is done by that Reverend Divine, Mr. Thomas Hooker of New England in his Hiftory, part 3. pag. 39. Such evils, (the words are his) which are either beynous and abominable, as fornication, murt ber, adultery, inceft, treafen, orc.or, if not fo groffe, yet carry the face of evil in their forebead, upon the first ferious and well grounded confideration of reason; and have been pertinaciously and obstinatly persisted in afterthe improvement of all means upon them for conviction and reformation : These only deserve Excommunication by the rules of Christ, I Cor. 5. Matth. 18, 17. thus far he. Advert, that what we speak here of a publick scandal, is spoken in respect of the nature thereof what is to be accounted fuch, in respect of its manifestnelle and notority, followeth afterward to be spoken of.

CHAP. II-

Conerning what order is to be keeped in the following of publick Scandals,

The second thing, to wit, what order and manner is to be observed in the following of publick Scandals, is not easily determinable, there being such variety of cases in which the Lord exereiseth cell cell fo Dil coll

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cifeth the prudence and wisdom of his Church-officers: and indeed the gift of Government (to fpeak fo I down especially kyth in the right managing of Discipline, in reference to the several humours and confirmions (to fay fo) which men have to do with For as in bedily diseases the same cure is not for the same disease in all constitutions and seasons, and as Ministers in their Doctrine are to presse the same things in diverse manners, upon diverse auditories; So this cure of discipline, is not to be applyed equally unto all persons; nay, not to such as are in the same offences. For, that which would scarce humble one, may crush another; and that which might edifie one, might be flumbling to another, of another temper, Therefore we suppose there is ho peremptor determining of rules for cases here, but necessarily the manner of procedor in the application of rules, is to be left to the prudence and conscienciousness of Churchofficers, according to the particular circumstantiate cafe. Yet we may lay down these generals,

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All publick processing of scandalous persons, or judicial taking notice of scandals, would be done with respect to the ends for which Discipline is appointed, and foas may attain the same. This, I suppole, cannot be denied: for, the mids must be suited to its end, Now, the ends of publick Censuring, are, I, for vindicating the honour of Jesus Christ, that suffereth in the miscarriage of a member. 2. The preferving of the authority of His Ordinances, and the chaftening of disobedience thereunto, Therefore It is called, 2 Corinth. 2. 6. The punishment that was inflicted, and chap. 10. 6. This is said to revenge all disobedience, it being appointed as an Ecclesiastick whip to keep up His Authority in His Houle, and thereby to note those that are unruly therein, 2 Thess: 2. It is for the persons good, as it is said, I Corinth, 5.4. for the destruction of the fielh, that the spirit may be saved, that by this, admonitions, reproofs, yea, threatnings, may have the more weight, for the persons humiliation and up-stirring: and the

The ends of Discipline.

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constraining of them at least to a more orderly walk in the Church, as the Apostle hath it, 2 Thes. 2.6 4. It is for the good of the Church , the the leaven of profanity spread not, and that others may thereby learn to fear: This reason is given 1 Cor. 5. 6, 7, &c. and 1 Tim. 5. 20. Now when we speak of the end of publick trial and censure, respect is to be had to all thefe, but especially to the more publick and generall ends, so as the persons particular edification be not neglected; and therefore in procedor, particular and speciall respect would be had to that manner (whether by meeknesse, or rigidity, by forbearing or proceeding) which may most attain these ends.

with.

Hence, 2. we fay, that the fame offences, upon of the same the matter, are not equally nor at all times, nor in all kind not al persons, and, it may be, in all places in the same man wayequally ner, to be pursued, and followed; and the reason is to be dealt clear, because according to circumstances, that manner which is edifying at one time, and in one cale may be defiructive in another, and to is not to be followed, because that power which God hath given is for edification and never for destruction, 2Corinth, 12. 10. And accordingly, we see Paul in some cases censuring corrupt men, as Hymeneus and Phyletus, I Tim. L. 20. Sometimes again, he threameth and yet spareth, although the scandal in it self deserved Censure, as when he faith, Gal. 5. I wish they were cut off that trouble you, and yet doth it not, because he found not the Churches edification to to require. So also, 2 Corinth. 10.4, and 6. Having in a readine ffe to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is sulfilled: which yet he thought not meet for the time to do, left it should have irritated to more disobedience, and have bred some greater rent or schism, or have made the anthority of the Ordinances leffe weighty, and to have marred his end which was in all things (and to in this forbearing) their edification, as he expresseth it, chap. 12.19. Brethren, we do all things (and so this also) for your sdifying.

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when I speak of edifying, I do not speak of pleating the perions (for that may be often deftructive to them and others allo) But this is intended, that it is to be weighted in Christian prudence, whether considering the time and place we live in , the nature of the period we have to do with, and of those also among whom we live, it be more fit to follow this way with fuch a person, at such a time, or another way? and accordingly as it feemeth probable, that this way will honour God most, more fully vindicare HisOrdinances, gain the person from fin to holineffe, at least, to a regular walk, and edifie othersmost; So accordingly ought Church-judicatories to take the way that leadeth most probably to that end. And therefore it ought not alwayes to be accounted partiality when such defference in Church-procedour is observed: yet these things would by all means be

guarded against.

1. That nothing be done with respect to persons, What is to or appear to be done fo; that is, for outward, civil, be guarded or natural respects, to be more gentle to one than to against, another, than which nothing is more derogatory to when there ecclefiastick Authority, and stumbling to people. isadifferent 2. This difference of proceeding, would rather be in way taken the manner and circumstances of proceeding in refe- in censuring rence to some offences, than in dispensing with what the same ofleemeth to be material; or, it would be in such of fences, fences where there is no fettled rule, and wherein Church-officers have more latitude: as for instance, some offences are of that publick nature that usually they are followed with a publick reproof; such cannot be conveniently paft-by in any ordinary conceivable case, suppose it be fornication or some such thing; yet, in the manner of citing and dealing with the perion, or expressing or timing of the reproof, there may be condescending; but to omit it alrogether, would hazard the casting loose of that Ordinance of publick reproof, which would mar the edification of the Church more than advantage any particular

party: Other offences again, are more occasional, in

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reference to which, there is no definit law, or practice, suppose it be speaking, reproved full words of some persons, Officers, or others, in such there is more liberty to coudescend which way may be most convincing to the party. Lastly, in trying what may be most edifying, we are not to look to one end alone, to with the persons particular good only, or the publick good only, &c. but to put all together, and to try how joyntly they may be best attained.

How church officers ought to carry in Censures.

3. From this also it will appear, that Church-Offcers ought with fuch tendernesse, love and sympathic to walk in publick Censures, as not only they may have a restimony in their own Consciences , but also that those who have offended, and others that obferve their way, may also be convinced of the same; for, if this be not, what can their Censure gain? and if it be needful for a Minister in preaching, to study that, it is in some respect more necessary here: because ordinarily, men out of their corruption, are more ready to mistake mens intentions in this: and we conceive, that in this a Church-judicatories procedour, ought discernably to differ from a civil Court, in that they are not only out of Justice censuring the party, with a respect to the common body, for whole good in some cases the most penitent member must be cut off, and cannot be reprived, but as endeavouring the Churches freedom from offences, that the offending member may be thereby with all tenderneffe reftored and cured; and in experience we fee, that often Church-censures have weight, as they are constructed to proceed from love. And we conceive, that the following of these and such like directions, may have much influence for attaining of this. J. That no thing be rashly and hastily brought to publick, but that which is a convincing Scandal in it felf, clear in the matter of fact, and also after private dealing with the person, and trial of his carriage afterward: if the scandal be not very groffe and publick, Hastie bringing to publick, irritateth: and if a private admonition of Minister and Elders might gain a Bro therPart 2

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ther, what needeth further? And by so doing, a person is convinced, that that Minister, or Elder, defreth his amendment, and on that condition to cover his offence. 2. There would be no rigid infifting in what is personal, in reference to any of the Judicatory, as suppose, they should sometimes get farling answers, or unbecoming words, or be met with by irreverent carriage: in that case, there would be condescending, and what is offensive beside, would be infifted on, and these personal things forborn. It is true, the authority of the Ordinances would ever be kept up, yet that is not alwayes done by a rigid profecuting of personal reflections; but on the contrary, it often looketh likest Christs Ordinance, when meeknesse is most prevalent, and so in the end, it cometh to have greater weight; for, many cannot discern betwixt officers feeking their own authority, and the authority of the Ordinances; and when the rife of the offence is from a miscarriage to some person immediately, it looketh to them to be carnal and vindictive like, and so hath the appearance of evil and is to be eschewed. This we may observe also in Pauls carriage, and in the practices of most zealous men. who never wronged the Ordinances by denying of their own respect in such cases. And Church officers would especially advert to this, because often in our hotest fits, it is rather respect to our own authority, than zeal for Christ that acteth us, which appeareth by this that a practical contempt of the Ordinances in our own hands, will flir more than many other groffe evils, or doctrinal blasphemies, or contemptuous practices which immediately reflect on others, although these may be more dishonourable to Christ. 3. For attaining this end, the rigidity, and strictnesse of law would not be stuck to, as the persons not appearing at such a day, if afterward they condescend; their haftinesse in expressing themselves rashly at one time, or carrying themselves irreverently, which afterward they may passe from : these and such like,

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under pretext of Church-discipline, to take advantage of them; and it is an evidence of the contrary, when they are condescended unto in this. Advert, this is to be observed in practices that seem to flow from infirmity; but, suppose the person were some subtile, deceitful, diffembling one, using his presents of repentance for furthering his defign, this condescention may be hurtful to the Church of God, in leting fuch an occasion slip, and therefore is not to be admirted. 4. It contributeth to this end also, that publick appearances and publick rebukes be not frequent, nor in eafes but such as are in the nature and evidence thereof convincing, and that also after private admonitions have been fruitlefly given. We suppose that mid step in Christs direction, Matth. 18. doth warrand this, Take to thee two or three before thou tell the Church. Haftie bringing to publick reproof, is constructed by many to be a seeking of their shame, but when it is rare, and done in the order forefaid, and also with some reasons why a publick rebuke in fuch a case is just and expedient, seing other means have failed, and the condition of others calleth for that now, &c. it doth much allay that prejudice; for every man hath reason and a conscience, though many often want the exercise thereof. We find also publiek rebukes rare in Scripture : And although sometimes, a publick appearing may be thought most edifying to the Congregation; Yet, 1. If they were very frequent, they would lofe their weight. 2. One publick rebuke in this manner and order, will edifie more than many otherwise: for it is not the multitude of them that edifieth, but the convincingness of the manner of proceeding. And therefore we conceive it is never fit to multiply publick rebukes, even suppoling that scandals were multiplied, but that some should be pitched-on that might most convincingly. edifie, and that private dealing with others for conviction be made the more weighty, which also is the judgement of the great Augustine. 3. Peoples offending for the omitting of publick rebukes, is, when the **scandal**

foundal thereof doth flow from this, that they conceive it to proceed from carlefnesse, negligence, partiality, or some such thing in the Officers, whereas, if by custome it shall be known to a people, that Officers are diligent observers of these things, and are not defective in dealing with scandalous persons for convincing of them, and do take this way as the most loving and tender mean of their gaining, such manner of proceeding will be more convincing and edify. ing, than if the thing were inflantly brought to publick; for, people generally approve of tendernesse and condescending in Church-officers, as looking like love to the gaining of fouls, and so lay much weight on their Cenfuring, even of others, when they fee them, as it were, constrained thereto. And on the contrary, there is nothing more offensive to them than when this tendernesse is desiderated. It is to be guarded here, that this be not made a cloak to negligence and unfaithfulnesse; for, diligence and freedom is to be no leffe used with the parties, yea more, than If they were brought to publick. Only, this forebearance is to be made use of as a mean for making that diligence and freedom the more successful: otherwise. whether it be forborn or followed, it continueth still to be hurtful. Also, when one of these abounding scandals, or scandalous persons is rebuked, then especially the Minister would so gravely and zealously agrege that evil, that in some respect all that are under it may be reproved, and his indignation at it may be fo discernable, that that one reproof may be in place of many, and yet the forbearance will give accesse for some to come off the same.

4. It is also to be remembered, that this exercise of How Dif-Discipline for restraining of scandals, is to be subser- cipline is so vient to the preaching of the Word: which is the to be ordermain and great edifying Ordinance; Therefore Dif- ed, as it cipline would be ordered so as it may not mar, but may not further that. In reference to which, these things are mar but to be adverted to, I. That no censure would be further the blindly or implicitely made use of, but both in refe- word.

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rence to the party, and others, there would be infirmation, exhortation, conviction, &c. by the Word, going before, or alongst with the same. In which resp & (though improperly) Censures may be some way looked upon as Sacraments in a large sense in these particular cases, because there is in them both some fignifying and confirming use; They being confidered with respect to the end wherefore they were appointed. 2. Church officers, especially Ministers, would not make Discipline the great uptaking bufinesse, so as it may prove an intanglement unto them, or diversion from the Ministery of the Word: The great Apostles, Act. 6. thought not fit to be diverted with the serving of Tables, but appointed Deacons to be chosen for that end, that they might give themselves principally, and, in comparison of other duties, fully (or as they fay themselves, ver. 4. continually) to prayer, that is, to the private exercise thereof; and the Ministery of the Word, that is, the preaching thereof in publick. By which we may fee, 1. what a Ministers great task is, wherein he should be taken up, to wit, secret prayer, (under which are comprehended, reading, meditation, and other duties meet for his own particular case, and preparation for the duties of his calling, as may be gathered from 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15.) and the publick preaching of the Gospel. 2. We see also, that though Ministers are viritually both Elders and Deacons, (as the Apostles were) yet ought they to regulat their exercifing of both these, with respect to the former two. And, 2. that Elders and Deacons ought in governing, and overfeeing the poor, to have special respect to keep Ministers from being burthened or toyled with these, that they may have freedom to sollow the Ministery of the Word, as the main thing: Yea, even to have much accesse to privacy & solitarinesse, which is both most necessary for, and a well becoming dury to a Minister; This is a special end of the appointment of these Officers, and in reference to which they are helps, I Cor. 12. 28. both to the people and

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to the Ministers. A third thing to be adverted to is. that contentious and irritating processes be so followed, as by these there be no prejudice laid before persons, to make them stumble at the Word, or to render it the more unprofitable. It is true, sometimes fuch things are necessary for the good of the body, and for the vindicating of Christs Ordinances, yet as much as may be they would be shunned, and Minifters especially ought to carry so in the manner, as to keep room for the Word in the affections of the parties. And we conceive, that multiplying and lengthning of processes (except where there is grave and weighty cause) and the way of trial of members, penitents, or such as are to be admitted to Sacraments, which is pleaded for by some, if it were put in practice, could not but much intangle Ministers, yea, become a more weighty and intolerable burthen to them, than the preaching of the Word: yea, could not but be obstructive thereto, contrary to the nature of Discipline, as faid is.

CHAP. III.

Shewing that Christs order and method, Matth. 18. is to be keeped, and what it doth imply,

The fourth general concerning proceeding in publick Scandals, which we would lay down, s, that Christs order, Matth. 18. be indispensably kept. Which we conceive, being compared with other Scriptures, doth imply these things, 1. That offenecs whether they be in lesser particulars, or in more grosse things, yet if they be but known to sew, tre not instantly to be brought to publick, (except ome circumstance necessitate the same for greater distinction) and this order is to be observed both by Officers and private persons. It were not therefore unsit, when any delation cometh by an Elder, or complaint by a private Prosessor, to enquire if they had observed this rule with such a party? and it alone,

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and with some others, friendly and rationally they have endeavoured to convince them? and if not. that they be remitted to follow that way, and if they have done it, It would be enquired, if their fo doing have had no weight? Or if the person hath confinued in the offence notwithstanding? If none of these can be said, there is yet no ground for publick tabling of a scandal: and this we suppose would cut off many needlesse processes, and prove more edifying. 2. It is clear from that place, that the offences to be complained of, are not injuries or wrongs to us under that notion as such, but what is offensive in its nature and under that confideration, whether any wrong be intended to us in it or not. It is not suitable to a Church-court to have only persons complaining of wrongs done to themselves, as if they be cursed, defamed, &c. and yet not to take notice of what is'offenfive, as wronging the honour of God, reflecting upon the profession of the Gospel, and really laying a stumbling-block before themselves and others. This is to neglect scandals, and to take notice of flanders, which, as we faid, differ from thefe. Hence, fuch persons ordinarily follow their complaints with much bitternesse, and never seek to convince the party privately. We conceive therefore, that such direct complaints, so circumstantiate, ought not to be admitted, at least, upon that confideration; lest the Ordinance of Christ be made subervient to mens particular pasfions and interests. It is therefore more fit when such offences arise, that they be taken notice of abstractly from such complaints, and that in the order that other scandals are to come in, whereof now we are speaking. 3. It is clear from that order, Matth. 18. that when the person offending, doth accept of the admonition, there is no mention further to be made thereof; yea, it would not be so much as reported privately, if it be not otherwayes known. 4. If that private admonition prevail not, then is the person to take two or three with him before it come to the Church, and this is not to be done superficially, and for exoneration

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hurch, r exoration fons edification. Therefore we suppose, that this is not to be affricted to one time, either in private, or before these two or three: for, once speaking may be but little useful; and seing the Church is to continue in dealing with the person before they give him over and proceed, and before they can account that he heareth not them, So ought it to be in the preceeding two fleps, seing the words are the same. Again, I fay, this would be done convincingly, they would argue (as the word is) with the offending brother, and not rest satisfied with some passing word or admonition. Further, these two or three would be chosen, so as may be most fit for that purpose, and may have most weight with him (we think some Elder, one at least, or two were not unfit) and this would be done purpofly, gravely and feriously, as the words, Take with thee, &c. import. All this is to preceed the bringing of a (candal to publick, which is to fift here if this prevail. Whence, 5. also we may see, that every scandal which is known to two or three, is not to be accounted a publick scandal, and at the first instant to be brought to the Church, because it is supposed, that these two or three may have knowledge of the same scandal, and yet may it warrantably never come to publick, if the person hear them. It looketh unlike this way to bring scandals to publick, wherein scarce two witnesses can be had. Indeed, after the fault noised and flagrant, and the presumption is great, and the party suspect like, such things are publickly to be taken notice of, though the proofs be not so pregnant. 6. If this do not the bufinesse, but the person continueth obstinate, although to the conviction of those two or three affesiors, the fact be groffe, and the party guilty, then it is to be brought to publick, either immediately by the person thar was flumbled, or by an Elder, (for which cause, we faid, it was not unmeet that one of these should be among the former witnesses (When it cometh to the Church, we conceive, that with the parties, it 69

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were meet to cal some one, or moe of those who were witnesses of the private admonition, that the Judicatory may be informed by them of the case, seing probably they may be more impartial than the other. And it will be conduceable for attaining clearnesse in the thing, to know what hath preceded, and where it left; and this would make private admonitions and witnesses therein, to have the more weight with men; for, knowing that their carriage at such a time would be made manifest to others, it would trave influence to make them at first more rational and sober, if they knew that what they faid then, would afterward be repeated to them before two or three; and what they spoke before, those were to be again impartially reported to the Eldership. And we conceive, it is for this cause amongst others that Christ calleth them witnesses, and such witnesses, as may establish matter, which must be rather in their testifying to the Church, than in private accompanying the offended party. For, when a person bringeth such an offence to a publick Judicatory, he must make out these two, 1. That such a person hath actually given offence, 2. That he hath effectually admonished him, and he hath not heard him, nor fatisfied him. Now, though the first be made out by other witnesses, yet the last cannot be made out but by such as were called by him; and therefore with respect to that they are called witnesses by our Lord, as is faid.

When this is done, the convincing and recovery of the party is yet to be effayed; and for that end, pains are to be taken, with all patience, gentlenesse, and long-suffering: if that prevail, there is no surther procedour called-for; if not, then publick admonitions and rebukes are to be added. If nothing prevail, the Sentence of Excommunication is to be added, the ground being convincingly scandalous in its nature, and clear in its evidence, as was formerly said; and it will not be found often in a Church where that progresse is keeped, that as will corre to this.

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If the offences be of that nature, that a publick rebuke be necessary, in respect of the circumstances and aggravations thereof, it is not to be neglected: Yet, it is not necessary that every offence that cometh to the Eldership, yea, even these that are known to many, should at all times be brought to a publick rebuke. For, if the Seffional or Elderships admonition have weight with the party, what needeth more in reference to him? And if there be no hazard that others be infected by that deed, or provoked by that example, there is no necessity alwayes in reference to them, especially, where it is known that such offences are not passed. For, that is one end of publick rebukes, I Tim. 5. 20. That others may fear. Yea, much more we conceive that many offences may be brought the length of publick rebukes, which yet are not to be drawn out unto Excommunication, even though compleat latisfaction feem not to be given. Because, 1. that Sentence is not to proceed, but upon weighty convincing causes, as is said, 2. Because, if the cause be convincing, the person offending may be expected fometimes upon after thoughts to admit of conviction, though diftemper or prejudice may for a time keep it off, as experience dorn prove.

But where the case is such as hazardeth insection to others, and the persons such as are contemptuous and ready to spread their leaven, as was both in the case of the doctrine and deeds of these Nicolaitans, the Sentence is to proceed, and that more fummarily: I fay, more summarify in comparison of what is past, yet not alrogether fummarily; for, Paul alloweth an Heretick to be once and again admonished, Tit. 3. 10. And in this Chapter, the Lord giveth Jezebel time to repent: and here those corrupt persons are exhorted to repent before He come to fight against them with the sword of His mouth, ver. 16. which (as we take it) looketh to the same Sentence. We will not be peremptory to deny what may be done when the crime is atrocious, the evidence palpable, the scandal great, the contemptuousnesse of the party, by their

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former and present carriage, rendering all hopes of recovering so desperate, that there is not so much as accelle to get a hearing, and a following of convidions, and the hazard of the scandal not admitting of delay: I say, in such a case, we will not deny what may be done for the Churches edification more fummarily; yet we are sure, ordinarily the way laid down is to be followed.

CHAP. IV.

Holding forth the frame wherewith Church-Officers (hould proceed in Cenjure, and helps towards the same.

N the last place, the manner of proceeding in all this, is especially to be looked to, without which all the rest will he weightlesse. Therefore in all the procedure, the Church-officers especially would have a zealous, serious, grave and authoritative manner of carriage, having weight and authority in their least looks and words, with all gravity: For, can that admonition have weight with others, that appeareth not to have weight with those that give it? Or, can the scandalous be serious in hearing, when there is no conviction on them, that they are serious and affected that speak? Ministers therefore especially, as also Elders in their place, would endeavour feriously and zealously with all tendernesse to the perfon, to expresse their indignation at, and abhorrency of such deeds; as it is commended in Ephesus, ver. 6. that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. And certainly, a Court of Christs ought to look like him, and like that businesse intrusted to them, and to have a different stamp from other Courts. And there is nothing that weakneth the authority of a Sentence more than the want of this. For helping therefore to it, we 1. That the conversations of such as take notice of Scandals in others, should be shining themselves, There can be no weightinesse without this; because the weight and authority that is to be flu-

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sciences, rather than compulsive to the outward man: and upon this ground, it is not the most honourable and rich that give Church-judicatories most authority, But those who are most shining and convincing in their carriage, particularly in reference to this trust: For, though outward place may gain more outward respect, yet this cannot but have more weight upon the conscience, which is especially to be affected by this Church-authority. 2. We would beware of founding this authority upon carnal grounds, or to lay the weight of it there, luch as the power and authority of men; yea, or upon our own place, parts, or weight: and upon that account (as it were) to boaft, rather than to perswade or convince. This fometimes may have weight as to some outward conformity, but doth ever lofe more of its native weightinesse: Therefore Ministers and Elders in the profecuting of this, would lay the weight here, that it is Christ's Ordinance, and that they act in His Name. 3. They would even in that procedure aim especially to deal with consciences to convince them, rather than to wrangle with corruptions, or to throw the outward man. 4. The Masters honour would ever be respected, yea, reverently and frequently mentioned, that all of them may be put and kept in mind that it is His Ordinance, and appointed for such an end: and the more room He get in the meeting, the more weight will their procedure have. 5. Mini-Rers, and Elders particularly, would pray for the bleffing to Discipline, as well as to the Word; and for the persons offending, even those that appear to be most stubborn, this becometh their ministerial authority well to acknowledge Him, and is the way to have His presence in the midst of them, without which they can expect no weight; and the more He be seen that is the Master, the more authority will they have who are the Servants. 6. It helps this also to have the matter and proofs convincing. Therefore particulars that look felf-like, or fiding with in-

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terests, or such as are involved in civil debates and contests, are to be shunned, or at least, not to be infifted upon: for, readily a convincing weighty matter, will have some impression of it self upon consciences. Hence, we will find in Scripture that generally (if not alwayes) publick processes are tabled upon scandals that flow from commissions, and that of luch nature, as is said. It is true, where an omisfion is owned, as suppose one should refuse to pray, or where palpably defended, and is not of infirmity, as idlenesse was in The falonica, I Epist. chap. 3. such are by their circumstances rather indeed commissions, and so to be accounted after admonition, and upon just ground are convincing. 7. There would be weight, gravity, impartiality, self-deniednesse, and affection kything in every circumstance, that they may look like the fervants of Jefus Chrift, who are feeking thee good of His people; and fo foolish sporting and laughing, idle and trivial questions, passionate words, heat, or particular and personal reflections, and the like, are most derogatory to the authority of a Church-judicatory, and do marthe weight of any Sentence upon a conscience, as is evident in daily experience, where sometimes Censures in their giving and receiving, are, upon the matter, an irreverent taking of the name of the Lord in vain. 8. There would be in all this, an holy boldnesse, and an undauntoned fearlesnesse in respect of men. When it cometh to any difficulty, minding the authority of Him whom we represent; yet so, as in this boldnesse, conscience of duty and zeal may both in our own consciences, and to the conviction of others, be the ground, end and motive thereof, and not any carnal flash of passion or pride, or fit of natural courage, which may make Church-officers look like men, but not like their mafter; for, as His Kingdom is not of this world in these respects, so ought His Officers to administrate the same otherwayes than a worldly authority userh to be; our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God, and therefore as fuch should be used.

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The last general direction concerning this, is, that Churchwhen Scandals are thus to be taken notice of, this processes proceeding ought to be with expedition : my meaning would be is not, that we should precipitate contrary to the for- carried-on mer directions; But, 1. That after notice of an of- with exfence, with all conveniency, the first steps of this pro- pedition. cedure would be effayed. 2. That there would not be long intervals betwixt these steps, although they may be frequently repeated. 3. That persons would not be kept long under processe, especially they would not have their appearances multiplied, except when it may be for good use. The reasons of all these, are, 1. Because when offences are fresh, then often the parties offending, and offended, as also others, are most affected therewith; whereas, if a long time interveen, that edge weareth away, and whatever the close be, it proveth not so edifying to any. weary, and so fal from that zealous, serious manner of carriage in it that becometh, for our spirits are foon out of benfal, and that derogateth from the weight of the thing. 3. It proveth irritating and burthensom to the parties offending, rather than convincing, and so the end is missed. 4. It hath also influence upon the confusing and burthening of Officers when processes are multiplied and lengthened, and it cometh some way to look like mens civil Courts, and that in such things as they use to be grievous unto these who are necessitate to wait on them.

To close this, we conceive it were fit for the authority of Church-judicatories, the weight of admonition, and the edification of persons, that there were some specially set apart for government, although they were sewer: And, O that this might be attained for, ordinary conversing of Elders in common and ordinary Callings, doth not a little obscure the weight of that Ordinance to many, except the conversation of the Elder in such things be singularly convincing: And until this be attained; there is the greater need for Church-officers to be as little in common businesse and discourses with those over whom they are set, as

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conveniently may be, that there may be the more acceffe to converse with them as becometh Officers; and when necessity calleth to it, there is need of gravity and circumspectnesse, that it mar not their weight in the duties of their office at any other time. And also Church-officers in their meetings amongst themfelves, would be alwayes grave and ferious, as being about an Ordinance of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. V.

Concerning what is to be done, when offending persons give no fatisfaction.

IF it be asked then, what is to be done, supposing persons not to give any satisfaction, even when they are brought to publick? This is indeed a difficulty, and will, no question, pulle any conscientious Church-officer; Yet, we suppose, we may classe such offences that are brought to publick in these three forts, and then answer. I. Some offences are in marters that are leffe horrid and scandalous, and come nearer to fins of infirmity, which yet are scandalous, being continued in Suppose officious lying, angry paffionar words, and fuch like, where these are repeared, the persons are to be rebuked in some cases; yet if they be not contemptuous, or the ills otherwise aggreged, we see not how there can be proceeding to Excommunication upon such grounds, because Excommunication is a chaffisement for some singular offenders, and is not for offences that are so common, as hath been formerly faid. Of this fort may be the sparingnesse of charity in Church-members, in giving little to the poor, or leffe than proportionally they should, though they do not altogether shut their bowels. This may be the object of admonition, but we think hardly of Excommunication, except it have groffe contempt with it, and so hazard of making void, by evil example, the course that Christ hath appointed for overfeeing the poor in His house, for which

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He hath appointed Deacons: and if publick charity upon any pretext were reftrained, that were to no purpole; which certainly highly reflecteth on Chrift. and is a grievous scandal. We find the Reverend Master Hooker, part 2. chap. 2. pag. 57. lay these two conclu-1. That the Church is to flint her Members, and determine the quota of their charity and freewillofferings, and that of her felf. 2. That if after the Deacons private diligence, this be not given in, he is to follow the action before the Church. Although we think defect of charity, in this respect, a great sin and an offence, and may be justly reproved, and the person admonished that is defective palpably in that which is proportionable to his ability; yet, that such a particular stint should be made by Church-power, and exacted under such certification, we cannot yet find to be warrantable. Although we give the Magiftrate that liberty, and where he exerceth it not, we acknowledge mutual condescension may do much. And we are fure, that if any fuch like thing should be found in the Presbyterial way, it had been charged with tyrannie, and encroaching on the place of the Magistrate long ere now: yet it may be (when it is well managed) no great corruption in a Church.

A second fort of offences are such, as are of themselves grosse and publick; yet not atroctous, or aggreged with contempt, such as fornication, some als of drunkennesse, and such like. The party, I say, not being obstinate, but seriously acknowleding his fault, and promifing to abstain and amend, in that case there is no ground to proceed to the highest Cenfure, though there may be a publick rebuke; yea, though their acknowledgment be not altogether fatiffying; yet, if after the publick rebuke, the person abstain these evils, and renue not the offence, the processe is to close, and to proceed no further : Because, 1. In that case it cannot well be said, that he hath refused to hear the Church when that abstinence followeth. 2. The end of a publick rebuke is not alwayes to be an evidence of the persons full recovery,

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But, to be a mean to recover him. 2. It is in it felf a publick acknowledgment of the fault, and a virtual engagement to abstain. And. 3, it hath a warning force and certification with it for the party offending, if he continue in his offence: Now, if he continue not, it cannot be faid that he hath incurred the certification, or made the rebuke altogether ineffectual: And therefore in such cases, a publick rebake being accepted, it putteth a close unto such processes: for, such publick rebukes are not an exercifing of the keys for letting-in any to the Church, that was not a member formerly; and therefore there is not such exactnesse required here, as in the first admission of heathens, yea, or in restoring of Excommunicate persons, who have been bound and thut out, but it is the warning of a member to prevent his being cast out. Seing therefore this rebuke loufeth nothing, there can be no necessity alleged here of fearthing into his acknowledgements or profession; and we make no question, that offending persons being rebuked before all, and abstaining from such offences afterward, were still to be accounted Churchmembers, capable of all priviledges, notwithflanding of the former offence. For, although he was offensive before that rebuke, yet was he not adually bound or excluded from any Church priviledge by that offence (because offence giveth ground to exclude, if contempt follow, but doth not actually exclude of it felf) neither doth the rebuke bind and exclude any if no further Censure follow and be added thereunto, but is intended to prevent both, And therefore, I say, that a person meerly rebuked for such an offence, and not continuing in, or renuing the fame, hath right to all Church priviledges, feing he is by no Ordinance of Christ excluded; and that way of publick rebuking, is appointed to prevent the falling of others, by that occasion.

A third fort of offences are such as of their nature are grosse, and in their evidence clear, suppose drunkennesse, fornication, grosse swearing, corrupt er-

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rours, &c. and the person offending, after much pains. doth yet continue obstinate, refusing to hear the Church; in that case the rule is clear to proceed with the Sentence of cutting off, If no accidental thing call for the suspending thereof, for respect to the

Churches good.

If it be asked, when a person is to be accounted ob- when is a stinate and guilty of not hearing the Church ? We person to be answer, It may be in these four cases, 1. When accounted the persons do contempruously refuse, or decline ap- obstinate. pearance, that is, either to hear private admonition, or to answer for removing of their offences before the publick Judicatory. This indeed is not to be aftricted to once or twice refusing, even when no reasonable excuse can be given: for, sometimes offenders are ticklish for a time, while their distemper continueth; and Church-officers would be favourable in admitting of excuses, and in their condescending to them. (as edification may be most furthered) as Mothers and Nurses will do to children: which similitudes the Scripture sometimes useth.

2. It is contempt, supposing a person to appear. and yet either to justifie his offence, as if it were no wrong; or to deny an evident fact, or to refuse any way to remove an offence given, &c. yet in such cases there is both forbearance and gentlenesse for a time to be essayed, and the offence is to be made inexcusable both to the conscience of the party, and to

the consciences of others.

3. Contempt may appear in this, when perfons offending appear, and do not deny the offence, yet by fuch proud carriage, haughry reflecting, irreverent expressions, and such like, do bewray contempt in the manner of their carriage, and thereby do give more offence than by their former miscarriage, or than if they had not appeared at all: Because, that doth reproach the Ordinance of Christ more, as it were in His presence to affront Him, and like the souldiers, to fay, Hail, King of the Jews; and to mock Him.

Part 2 A fourth thing that may be judged contempt, and not hearing of the Church, is, when a person appearing, doth with some seeming reverence acknowledge the fault, suppose drunkennesse, slander, fornication, &c. and yet doth notwithflanding continue in. or frequently reiterate the same offence, for these cannot be judged fins of infirmitie, especially when they are fo frequent, and that after admonition; for, the Churches admonition doth not only tend to draw forth an acknowledgement of the offence past, but to prevent the like for time to come; and where that is not, it cannot be faid that Christs Ordinance hath had weight. And in such a case, the accounting of verbal acknowledgements enough, where there is a continuance in some seen evils, were to make the Ordinance of Christ obnoxious to reproach, and to frustrate it of its end, which is to remove and prevent offences, (for in that case they abound more) and it would strengthen men that could dissemble, to continue in their profanitie, seing by that they might ever escape the Sentence of Excommunication, and fo profane persons might abound in Christs Church to the dishonour of his Name, and the reproach of the Gospel, and yet there be no accesse to His Officers by His Ordinances to purge them out. And feing this would be ridiculous in any humane Court, to account fuch a man a receiver of admonitions, it were abourd to affert it here.

what when an offence is not groffe, yet bath contempt with it.

If it be asked, what is to be done in cases where the offence is not of a more groffe nature, and cometh near to a fin of infirmity, and yet hath contempt added thereto, in one of these respects? Answ. 1. We have faid already, that it is hard to ground Excommunication upon luch a rife: Therefore, 2. Churchofficers would warrily deal with such offenders, so as there be no feerning occasion given them to contemu; and much forbearance, and even a kind of overlooking (so far as is confistent with faithfulnesse) is to be exercised in such cases, in reference to some persons, for it hath prejudice with it to take notice

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notice of such Scandals, and thereafter without fatisfaction to passe from them, and it is difficult and not alwayes edifying to purfue them: we conceive It therefore more fit, not to take Judicial notice (at least) of them all , but to continue a serious and loving dealing with such persons in private, because possibly more rigid dealing might wrong them and the Church more then edifie. Yea. 3. If it come to publick, frequent trials would be taken of them before is be judged contempt, that so if it be found needfull to proceed further, the contempt may be fo aggreged, that it may be feen, that edification requireth the same to be prosecuted, and then it is the contempt that beareth the weight of the Sentence, and not the first offence; Therefore this would be so manifest, as it may be convincing to the consciences of all to be insufferable.

CHAP. VI.

concerning what is to be accounted satisfaction, or satisfying.

He great Question is, when a person doth appear and acknowledge his offence, and submit to a publick rebuke, what is to be judged faitsfying here, so, as a Church-judicatory may fift Processe, and rest satisfyed, and admit the person to Church-priviledges, as if the former offence had not In answering of this, we shall, first, shew what is not fatisfying. Secondly, what is not necellary to be enquired after by a Church-judicatory for this ecclefiastick satisfaction. Thirdly, we shall what kind Then, answer of satisfathew what is necessary and satisfying. a Question or two, for absolving of this.

1. We say, every verbal acknowledgement of a sufficient for fault, even though it have a promise of amending, is making a not sufficient: for, that may be in two of the cases Church-juformerly mentioned, to wit, in a person that doth, in dicatory to his so doing but mock the Ordinance; or in a person sist

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that man hath often relapfed aftet fuch a profession, or for the time doth continue in that or some other. gross evil: in that case to account such a profession of repentance fatisfying, were to fall in the former inconveniencies, and would prove a manifest taking of the Name of the Lord in vain, which we may gather by this. Such a circumstantiat profession ought not to satisfie a Brother in a private admonition, so that notwithstanding thereof (yea, the rather) he ought thereafter to take two or three with him, as being more offended, and if they meeting with the fame, may put it to the Church, as not being well fatisfied with such mockings; then much lesse ought the Church to be satisfied therewith, because they do more formally represent Jesus Christ and His Authority, and therefore mockings and contempt to them, is the greater offence. And that place, where the Lord speaketh to Peter, Luk. 17.3. of forgiving his brother seven times a day, and elsewhere, seventy times seven times a day, is not to be undestood to speak principally of such grosse publick offences, or of fuch discernable counterfest turning (for that is not turning at all) but of private offences, or of the first fort formerly mentioned, and also where there feemeth to be ingenuity in the person, otherwise it were to remove one offence by another; and in that the Lord ordereth men in reference to their private carriage, for they ought to forgive wrongs, and doth not regulate Church actions, as judicious Calvin doth give warning upon the place: Befide, the chastening, and humbling of the offending party, the making of others to fear, and the turning away of the reproach that cometh to Christs name by offences, being the great ends of Church-censure, by admitting of such a profession as satisfying, all of them would be utrerly enervated and overturned, which were most absurd.

If it be asked, how this diffembling, mocking prodissembling fession may be discovered? Answ. 1. By somewhat be discove- palpable in the very present gesture, words, expre ed. flions,

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ffions, &c. which evidence the same, and leave no room for charity: as when men (as it were) with a word, fay Hail to Christ, and at the next, spit in His face, it is easie to say, that their Hail was not ferious. 2. By comparing it with a persons former carriage in such a case wherein so much hath been professed, and yet he afterward hath been found to be mocking even in the time of his profession, his former carriage calleth men, at least, not to be soon fatisfied, if no difference be. 3. By some words or expressions in other Societies and Companies, which being vented during the time of this publick profession, and that contrary thereto, cannot but evidence it to be a mocking. And, 4. When the fruit appeareth to be contrary thereto in a habitual way, as hath been faid. Indeed if there be not convincing evidence of this mocking, but it be doubtful; or, if a person that at one occasion is irreverent, should afterward appear more fober, we conceive in that case, determination is to be suspended, till after carriage give more ground of clearnesse, either to the one hand or the orher.

CHAP. VII.

Shewing what is not necessary to satisfaction.

O the second thing, to wit, what is not necesfary, or to be enquired for, by Church-officers to be an ecclesiastick satisaction for removing of an offence. We answer, That the saving grace of repentance, or godly fincerity therein in the person, is not to be enquired into, as the alone ground upon which they may rest satisfied. For, 1. That would put a Church-judicatory so far as they could to determine of the flate and graciousnesse of every offending person before they were satisfied, which were absurd, that not being the object of Churchdiscipline, and it's nowhere to be found that men are

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called judicially to determine of the state of another. 2. It would lay this ground, That none should be after any offence recover'd and admitted to priviledges. except they were thought really to be gracious; which would infer, that none fhould be admitted to the Church, but such; yea, that none should be continued in the Church, but such : because readily there are none, but in lesse or more give offence, so far as may be the ground of a private admonition, which doth once table them : and if nothing can be fatisfying but what giveth ground to account them gracious, it would come to that, that men are to be excommunicated because they are not thought to be gracious, and cannot give evidence of that. 3. So every person that were received after an offence, would have a Sentence of a Church-judicatory standing to prove them to be converted, which certainly would prove offensive, and a flumbling to many who are too apt to ground presumption on a lesser occasion. 4. It would put Churh-officers upon the rack, and prove a terrour to them : For, I. There is no evidence given in the word whereby one may know the gracious estate of one another infallibly; and shall that be only fatisfying to us, which by no means we can know? 2. God hath not given men dominion over consciences to search or censure them in their ends, motives,&c. but as appeareth in their outward actions, and there being nothing that can evidence foundnesse in the outward action it self, because Hypocrites may come that length, it cannot be that that must be their task, to decide where their is no possibility to attain to a satisfying decision. faid, that they are to proceed as in charity they judge the person to be fincere, Then we oppose, procedure in Church-judicatories must be according to fuch rules as a person that judgeth wrong may be convinced that he judgeth wrong, if a wronged party should complain; But if the man's own thoughts and charity of such a man were the rule, whereby he is to judge, then suppose some Judicatories

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tories unwarrantably to admit, or to debate fome. there were no way to convince them that they had indged wrong, because none could judge their fingleneffe. Again , if it be faid, that that may be gathered from evidences, Then we defire to know what evidence is to charity a sufficient ground to make a man to be accounted gracious, and without which he is not to be accounted such? If there be no such evidence, then the decision lieth upon the persons judgement and inclination, which falleth in the former inconvenience : If there be such evidences, I. It will hard to condescend upon them. 2. They are either fuch evidences as may be judicially demonftrated to be in such a person, or not to be in him: If they may be demonstrated to be in him, then it is not charity that decideth, but a law, which we will acknowledge when it is discovered, if they cannot be judicially demonstrated to be in such a person, or not to be in him; then the redreffing of any corrupt decision is still made impossible, and there is no more but the conjectures of such mens charity in such a case; Then, how can these absurdities be answered? As, 1. What if such Church-officers should be partial? in that case their charity will eithet be too narrow, or too broad, and can that be the rule of procedure in Christ's House? and yet Church-officers are men subject to such infirmities. 2. What if the person should think himself wronged by their accounting him not to be gracious, would that be sufficient to convince him because they thought so? and yet it cannot be faid, that according to Christ's order Church-officers should Sentence an offending party, and not be able to convince him; and he cannot demonstrate it to them so as to convince them, and so it is for ever undererminable, which is most absurd. What if he appeal to a Supream Judicatory? how could they defend their Sentence? Or, what if the fuperiour Judicatory judged him to be fincere? how

could one of these Judicatories convince the other, if

charity only were the rule? And yet it cannot be

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thought, that by Discipline and Censures, which are appointed by Jesus Christ for entertaining of union. that toch inevitable grounds of division should be laid? Again, could it be but Irritating to a person judicially to be declared unregenerate, and would it not afterward both make fuch Sentences, and those that pronounce them to have the leffe weight? 2. Suppole in the same Judicatory some persons charity should be larger then others, what is to be done in that cale? There is no possibility for one of them to convince the other; yea, can it but flir up new offences? for the one of them is ready to judge the other, either unaquainted with spiritual conditions or untender; for the judging upon the fincerity of grace, requireth the exercise of a christian and spiritualdiscerning; and therefore accordingly as it is exercised differently, so are men ready to account of others to be at best Christians of different fizes; and we suppose that in nothing a mans grace hath more occasion to vent than in his uptaking and judging of the gracious estate of another, because this supposes acquaintance and sympathy with, and experience of fincere grace, more than is either in preaching, prayer, or such exer-And this certainly would be no little flumbling to Church-officers, to be so frequently put to give trial of their own graciousnesse, whereas if we walk by fettled rules, there is no fuch occasions to stumble. 4. Do not we see that one mans charlty doth differ from another, and so diverse men in the same extrinsick action of judging in a Churchcourt, should have diverse rules to judge by in the same act, possibly leading them to judge contrarily, 5. Doth not oftentimes the which were abfurd. same one mans charity differ from what it was at another time, and he will be more and less in extending it according to the frame of his own spirit, the dulness or confusion of his own mind, or possibly accordingly as he hath fome relation or obligation to, or prejudice at the person, which may steal-in on his judgment, and (as it is faid) blind the eyes of the wife, and

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and pervert the understanding of the just, and he really think himself fingle in judging? And can such a fleeting unconstant rule be that which Christ hath appointed in His Church to order the removing of offences? 6. Do we not know, that often mens charity, in such cases, is swayed much by the judgment of some one or other who is esteemed of? And so this way which pretendeth to give most liberty-doth indeed bind up most : For, men either in that case farisfie themselves, that such a man is sincere, or not, because such another saith so, and so he goeth on implicitly, not doing what he doth in faith; or he hath his own suspicions that others do not determine rightly of such a person's sincerity, and then he is at this strait, either to contrary his own light, and go one with the other, or to judge otherwayes, and by so doing to give out his own spiritual discerning to be beyond that others, and therefore to judge him for mistaking in it. And contradiction in this, is not as in other cases, where only mens moral light and understanding do vary; but here, as we faid, it is in a thing that is most purely spiritual, and peculiar to the People of God only, whereof natural men and hypocrites are not capable.

What the Reverend and most convincing Writer, Mr. Wood, hath in his Examination of Mr. Lockiers Little-stone, to prove that sincerity of true grace is not to be enquired for as the constitution or complexion (as Mr. Lockier speaketh) of visible members in the visible Church, doth fully make out this also, for, there is the same reason against the enquiring after the sincerity of grace, in respect of the impossibility thereof in this case, as in that: and there needed nothing surther to be added for consirming of this, till those his pregnant Argu-

ments be answered.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

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Holding forth what may be fatisfying.

He answering of the third Question , to wit, what is to be accounted fatisfying, and what is to be refted on in such a case by Church-Officers, will clear and confirm this more. 1. That a difference is to we answer, we premit, be made between what is fatisfying to a Church-judicatory loas to admit an offending person to all priviledges, as if the offence had not been, and what may be fatisfying to fift further procedor, and prevent Excomunication. For I suppose a persons satisfaction may not be sufficient as to the first, which yet may be sufficient as to the second, as (for instance) it may be thought of Simon Magus, Atts 8. 24. who, after Peter's rebuke, carried fo, as hedid not proceed to caft him out, yet may he well be efteemed of, notwithstanding of such professed conviction, not to have had the full priviledge of a Church-member inftantly; and this may proceed either from the groffeneffe of an offence (such as that was) or the unsatisfyingnesse of a persons satisfaction, or both; in which cases edification requireth some time of trial, before there be a proceeding either to an off-cutting or to admitting to the former liberty. 2. We would diftinguish (which is fib to the former) between that which is not fully fatisfying, and that which is altogether diffatisfying; for there may be a mids, as suppose, that a man by filence should accept a reproof; or in words and carriage express something which neither doth speak seriousnesse, nor mocking. We suppose it is hard instantly to judge that person either to be obstinate, or yet to have full accesse to all Ordinances.

To the Question then we answer that for sull satisfaction, so as to have accesse to all the priviledges, there is requisit a sober, serious acknowed gement of the offence with the expression of an unseigned-like pur-

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pose to walk inoffensively, especially in reference to these former offences; and where this is, we say, it is fufficient. When we speak of a fober, ferious acknowledgement we speak of it as it flandeth contradiftinguifhed upon the one fide from fincere grace; for one may have this, and not have that : And, as upon the other fide, it is diffinguished, not only from groffe contempt and profane mocking, but from gross diffimulation appearing to be fuch, or from carnal indifferency and unferfouineffe. By Divines, this is called moral feriousnes, or finerity, (as it is diffin. guished from that which is gracious) and usually is in subtile legal hypocrites, and sometimes may be in some gross persons in fits. It cannot be better expressed, then it is by the forementioned worthy Author, Mr. Wood, part. 1. pag. 30. that is, That which is not openly and discernably simulate, histrionick, scenical, and hypocritical in that hypocrific which is groß: but all circumstances being considered, by which ingentity is estimate amongst men, giving credit one to another, there appeareth no reason why the man may not and ought not to be esteemed, as to the matter, to think and purpose as he fpeaketh from whatfoever habitual principle it doth proceed, viz. whether from a saving principle, or whether from a common opperation of the spirit only, Thus far he.

If it be asked, how this seriousness may be discern- How moral ded, It may be again enquired, How useth a man to seriousnesse be thought serious in his pursuit after any thing? I may be disgrant, this is not only to be gathered from his words, cerned. or carriage possibly at one time. But, will not seriousnesse, cerned. But, will not seriousnesse, cerned. It kyths in a mans manner of urging it? 2. It kyths in a mans using of fit means for attaining of it, which are suitable to that end. 3. By his carriage, abstaining from such things as may any way make his profession to be suspective. And, 4. not doing this for a day, or upon a particular occasion, but for a time continuing constant and instant therein, with such affectionateness and earnessnesses in the circumstances that are necessary, that what ever be the motive that swayeth such a

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man, vet that he appeareth to be morally ferious and through in the thing, cannot be denied, So in this · case, often there may be a conviction that persons are ferious, and are affected fo, that we may expect they will endeavour really the preventing of such an offence, and yet we may not be able to judge them for convincingly fincere, because to that there is more required, to wir, a new decision whether that serioufnesse, be moral only, or gracious, according to the principles, ends, motives. &c. which cannot be fo evidenced externally, as feriousness in the general may be.

If alwayes charity (hould ly serious.

If any fay, that charity ought to judge fuch a man fincere, seing it can have no mor? Answ. I. What may be a persons private thoughts upon thesegrounds judge a per- we are not to determine; we only fay, that this acknowsonto besin- ledgement cometh nor to be judged by a Churchcere, who is judicatory upon that account. And, Secondly, These thus moral. who defire morefor the conflituting of Church-members, require befide this, evidences of the work of grace upon the heart, and expressions and narrations to that purpose. And indeed if the accounting of a person to be gracious and fincere, were the alone account, upon which a person were to be admitted or restored to an actual right to the Ordinances, such a ferious profession would not be sufficient for the convincing of Church-officers of a persons graciousnesse even probably; for that which is to be accounted a probable figne of faving grace, must be that which though it doth not alwayes hold and be convincing, yer for the most part doth so; for if it doth more ordinarily fail than hold, it cannot be called probable: but experience in all times will confirm this, that more frequently such a profession faileth, and afterward the person is found not to be gracious; therefore it cannot be a probable figne, nor are we to account it fuch: we suppose, hat if all the Churches of Christ that have been gathered, and all the penitents that have been received, were compared together, it will be found, that there have been many moe hypocrites than nd

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than fincere Believers, yet in these cases this serious profession was called for. And though it might be pleaded, that charity may conftruct the best of a perion, where the case is doubtful, yet (to speak abstractly of a figne) to account that a probable figne of fincerity, and fuch which cught to fway charity to account a persongracious, when yet it is clear in reason, that such a figne is ordinarily but an indicium or evidence of moral fincerity, but not of faving grace, were against reafon: for, even in bodily difeafes, that cannot be counted a probable figne of health, to ground a judgement of fuch a persons livelinesse, with which many moe do die than recover. Nor can it be called uncharitablenesse, because the profession is not soaccounted: for, it is charity here to account the person serious, and to think as he faith, and not to be: diffembling therein, although it be not impossible for a diffembler to come all that length in outward evidences and profession. But to believe that he is indeed so, as he faith, or thinketh, is not a thing which charity is bound positively to conclude, but, at the most, by judgeing nothing to the contrary to forbear any judgeing of the party till time evidence more afterward. And, I suppose, there are few who have experience, but know that there are many cases wherein they are fully satisfied to judge the person serious, and yet dar not determine of their fincerity and graciousness, yea, even as to the probability thereof, although they dar not deny but it is possible; yet durst they not found a Sentence of absolution upon that as such, to their own fatisfaction, although upon the former account they can; which evidently sheweth that these two confiderations may be separated.

Hence, the first doth sollow, that whatever be a private persons account of such a profession, yet it is not considered by the Judicatory as the evidence of sincerity in there being satisfied with it: Because, 1. It can be no evidence thereof, as is said; and we would be necessitated then to say, (if sincerity were the account upon which a Church-judicatory were

to be fatisfied) that either they behov'd to have that evidence proven, and made evident to them, or they behoved to proceed, without any certain, yea, or probable evidence: for, certainly, that which giveth a Judicatory warrand to proceed to declare a person to have right to any priviledge, must both be a thing that is relevant in it felf, and evident in the proof therefore, in reference to that parry; But, none of these can be faid: Therefore the judging such a thing to be fincere, is not the account on which they proceed. This cannot be faid to be a certain proof of fincerity, yea, none will deny but it is difficult, if not impossible, for one to have infallible proof of an others fincerity: Then it must be said, that it is but a probable proof that can be given of fincerity. To which we reply, 1. That this prof ssion formerly described, cannot be called fuch as hath been showen. So it would follow, that a Church judicatory doth account a man fincere, and doth admit him to fuch priviledges as they ought to admit only such unto, and yet it was not made so much as probable to them that he was such. 2. Although it did probably evidence him to be fuch, yet that were not enough, if that were the alone account upon which they were to proceed, because no judicial procedour in determining a mans right, will go upon probabilities, because the Law decideth not upon a probable but upon a real right: and indeed, if in this case sincerity were the ground of procedour, no man could judge but doubtingly and upon conjecture, and so could he not have peace afterward, because it was still uncertain to him whether he had determined warrantably or not: yea, if it should be faid, (which yet will not be sufficient) that it may give a man peace, if in his charity he account the person sincere, although indeed he be not fo: this will not quiet the mind: because I put no question but experience will teach any that are tender, that there are many cases, that if they were putto it, they durst not, even according to their own charity and opinion, determine of a persons sincerity, so as to take

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to ke take upon them a decision in that, either by determining of the perion to be fincereor not, and so of his admission or feclusion to, or from Church-ordinances

and priviledges.

2. The account upon which we admir, and the proof thereof alfo, must be proportionable and opposit to the account and proof upon which we debar: for binding and loofing are both of the fame nature. acts of the same power, in reference to the same end. and the one of them answereth to the other. Now. when we bind a man for a Scandal. 1. It is not accepted as a ground of binding, until it be proven and made evident, and not probably only, Therefore nothing can be the account upon which we can loofe but that which may be evidently proven also; for it looketh not suitable-like to bind a man upon clear evidence, and to exclude him from a right, and to admit him again, only upon probabilities and prefumptions, much leffe where the proof doth not Again, 2. When a person is shut amount to high. out he is not thut out upon the account that he is unrenued, or upon the account that such an act was not fincere, or that he appeared to be such, But he is thut out, because it was scandalous to others, and unbecoming the Gospel, even though the persons fincerity should not be questioned: Therefore, by the rule of contraries, it followeth, that it is not fincerity which is the account upon which Church-officers are to loofe.

If it be asked then, under what notion, or upon what account that moral serious profession is to be accepted as satisfying? We answer, upon this account, as it is apparently serious and editying, without determining whether it be sincere or not, but as convinced that by such a profession the prejudice and offence that came by the former miscarriage, and lest a blot upon the Church, and a stumbing-block before others, may be removed. So, that as it was unbecoming a Church-member to commit such a scanlous sin, So now by such a serious profession, that

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blot of making Christianity to be accounted a fostering of profanity is wiped away, that flumblings block of his example is taken out of the way, fo that this profession may be edifying to prevent the sum. bling of any other upon his Scandal, and the accepting thereof may look like a hopeful mean of edifying the person for the time to come, and recovering of him from that snare he was into: and so as his scandalousnesse in these respects was the account upon which he was actually, or was to have been Sentenced, So oppositly thereto this serious profession on having a proportionable edification, or of it felf a tendency, to edifying, in all the respects mentioned going alongst with it, it is the account upon which it is accepted as fatisfying, without determining of the fincerity thereof, leaving the person to answer before God for that, and before men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, which was Johns way in dealing with such as came to his Baptilm, Matth. 2. upon whose fincerity we think its clear that he did no way decide; but of this enough: We come to confirm our answer.

this That moral seri-Sufficient. confirmed.

For confirming of this, to wit, that such sober and serious profession of repentance, is sufficient without oufneffe is further enquiry after the graciouineffe of the fincerity thereof, We may confider these grounds, 1. If fuch a profession be sufficient for admitting members to the Church, Then such is also sufficient for the recovering of offending members and continuing them in their former priviledges; for, no reason can be given why there should be greater rigidity for readmitting to the actual use of Church-priviledges, a Christian after he hath fallen in drunkennesse, fornication, &c. than was requifit for the admitting of a Heathen, possibly guilty of these same sins beside; But the first is true, as is irrefragably and convincingly demonstrated by the formentioned worthy Author Mr. Wood. Ergo, &c.

2. It may be supposed, that a gracious man, of whose graciousnesse there is no question in the charity

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of any doth fall in some Scandal, what is to be accounted fatisfying in him, must be fatisfying in others. Now, it is not any conviction of the graciousnesse of his state that can be satisfying in this case, nor yet is that the account upon which we can proceed, because that is never questioned even when he is under the offence. If it be faid, it must be the fincerity and graciousnesse of his particular act of repentance. Answ. 1. It is difficult to give judgement of the flate of the person, but more difficult to give judgement of the graciousnesse of a particular act. 2. Suppose fuch a person had a particular acknowledgement so circumflantiated as is formerly described in this moral fincerity, would not that be sufficiently satisfying? And if it be fatisfying in one, in reference to a particular offence; why not in another? Because, I. There is one rule given by Jesus Christ to all. 2. The removing of an offence relateth to the offence given? and not to the state of the person who gave it. Therefore if that satisfaction be sufficient to remove that particular offence in one, it mustalsobe so in reference to another, because the question here, is not what may be sufficient to evidence a person to be gracious, but what may be sufficient in a person to remove such a particular offence? If it be said, that it is accepted of that gracious person as satisfying, because he is accounted to be gracious, it may still be urged, The Question is not, whether the person be gracious, but whether that act of repentance of his be fo, or not? for, it cannot be denied, but a gracious person may have acts of hypocrifie, and in particular acts be carnal: either then such a person must be excluded though he be gracious, and in this respect seriously doth profess repentance, which were hard to do: or, he must be upon that profession admitted, and so that must be sufficient for Church-satissaction as is said.

3. That which ought to fatisfie a Brother in private, or after his taking of two or three witnesses

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with him, and which may be accounted a hearing of a private admonition; that fort of repentance ought (for to be fatisfying to the Church-officers : Because, tell the Church succeedeth to the contempt of private admonition, and therefore they are to obtain by their Interposing of authoritative rebukes, what the other did not obtain, and so they are to rest satisfied when that is obtained, as the gradation, Matth. 18.is clear, bearing of the Church, being in respect of the effects, that same which bearing of the private admonitions is, to wit, the obtaining of fatisfaction. But the former is true, to wit; a Brother ought to rest satisfied with such a sober serious professionand acknowledgement as giveth him ground to judge him really affected for his offending, and under a purpole to abstain and amendsfor the time to come : and who will fay, that a Brother in such a case can rationally complain of another, as not having had his admonition? So, neither can the Church proceed further, when her admonition hath that weight, felpg there had been no accesse for her judicially to have admonished, if fo much had formerly been obtained : and if it may be faid that such a private admonition so successful, did gain the offending Brother, Is not that fame to be faid of the Churches admonition having that success? and when he is gained, are not they to rest satisfied? and yet we suppose, that none will say, that by gaining in that place, real conversion is intended, and that a private Brother should insist to the uttermost, till he be fatisfied in that.

4. We may argue thus: If fuch a profession, and a persons, amendement in the manner spoken, be the bearing and gaining that is intended, Matth. 18. Then are Church-officers to be fatisfied therewith; But the former is true, as appeareth thus, The Churches fatisfaction must be in respect to her speaking, her speaking to the party must be with respect to the complaint made to her by a particular person; that complaint, again, must have respect to what offended him, which is some particular act having offence with it

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and it was not the ungracious state of the person. ught If for fo the word, If thy brother offend thee, &c.importeth) Now, from the first to the last, such satisfaction as is described, may be satisfying in reference to such a particular offence, and be fufficient for removing the fame, and restoring the person to the esteem and condition which formerly he was into. And therefore it is to be accounted as fatisfying by the Church. And if more were to be enquired for, it were to make the fatsifaction beyond the offence, which were unjust.

4. That which may be accepted as a fatisfaction from an Heretick, as the fatistying fruit of a publick admonition, cannot be refused as satisfaction in other cases; for, if circumspectnesse and rigidity be to be used in any ease, it is in this: But a serious acknowledgement of an error, and an abandoning of it indeed, is to be accepted for Church-satisfaction from an Hererick, and as the fruit of an publick admonition, and he in that respect is supposed to be gained: Ergo, &c. That this is to be accepted from him, may be gathered from Tit. 3. 10, A man that is an heretick, reject after the first and second admonition. Where these things are clear, I. That an Heretick that continueth fo, and heareth not the Church, is to be rejected. 2. That an Hertick renouncing his errors after admonition, and not continuing such, is not to be rejected, and so is not to be accounted an Heretick or under that scandal of herefie, and therefore his difclaiming of it, is to be accounted fatisfying as to the Church-officers; otherwise, it would follow, that although he renounced his herefie in that serious and morally fincere manner, yet were he still to be dealt with as such by the Church, except they were satisfied in the fincerity of his grace, which is contrary to Paul's direction, and the end of that publick admonition: which is not given him because of his unrenued state, but because of his herefie. Now, that being taken away and fatisfied by his submission, the admonition must be acknowledged to be satisfied, and so he is neither to be dealt with as an Heretick,

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nor as obstinate, but as one who hath heard the Churches admonition.

6. From the 2Theff. 2. 6, 14, 15. we may gather the fame : for we have thefe things clear , T. there were some there who walked disorderly as to some particular acts. 2. That the Apostle accounteth that diforderly walking to be scandalous, and judicially to be taken notice of, if it be not removed, And, 2. what that fatisfaction is which removeth the same, is expressed by him, ver. 14. If a man obey not our word by this epiftle &c. So that It was actual amending of what was scandalous, and thereby giving obedience to his direction, which was so to be accounted. And in that case, a brother offending. was neither further to be noted, nor to be eftermed scandalous, without any further enquiry to be had of the graciouinesse of his state, or the principle ends or motives of his obedience.

7. It may appear thus, That which may remove reproach from the Ordinances, and offence in reference to these that are without, is to be accounted satisfying, because that is one of the ends of Discipline to stop the mouths of such as are without : Now as it is not any thing within, or the want of fincerity which doth offend them, and open their mouths, So this morally fincere and reall change, (to fpeak fo) is sufficient to farisfie them, at least, it cannot be faid that they can reach further. This argument alone we acknowledge might not feem to be cogent, yet confidering; that what is offensive, is some external thing having a proportionable offenfivenesse, both to those that are within, and also to those that are without, and a thing is offensive, because it is apt to offend such, There ought therefore also a proportionablenesse to be between what removeth an offence in reference to both.

Differences

8. If we confider the proper object, parure and between the end of the key of Discipline, as it is abstractly consikey of Do- dered, as contra-diffinct from the key of Doctrine, ctrine and we will find that no more by it can be expected. For, Discipline. I. its proper object is somewhat; that is scandalous

Part 2. and to it reacheth only to reftrain, regulate, and indge the outward man, or fomewhat in the out ward conversation firffly, thoug h the fruit of that hath a further look mediately. The key of Doctrine again, or the Word reacheth in, and becometh a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and to make Discipline judge the inner-man, in this respect, were to confound: these two keys which the Lord hath made diffinct: and therefore, if Discipline have any influence upon the inner-man favingly, it is but mediately by condemning his outward practices, and him as fuch, or making of directions, reproofs, &c. in the Word more weighty. 2. The key of Discipline doth only that from outward priviledges, and doth not but from any spiritual interest in Christ, but as it concurreth to confirm some threatening in the Word, which debarreth many from faving promifes and the things contained in the which Discipline may admit to outward privileges. 3. There is a difference in respect of absolution also, to wir, the Word when it absolveth, it doth absolve from the curse of God. and giveth accesse to the promises, and a title to the things promised; Discipline again, doth but absolve from outward Centures and reffraints, and doth but give right to Church-priviledges. 4. There are different conditions and qualifications upon which thefe two keys bind and loose: for, the Word openeth to none but upon condition of fincere faith and repentance, and absolveth none but reall Believers, pronouncing all unbelievers to be under the curfe; Again, Discipline (as such) cannot shut out men from external priviledges, because they are not regenerate, and fincerely gracious; and so in that respect, it must have a different condition of shuting men out, or it must consider them upon another account, in excluding them from Church-priviledges, than the Word doth in excluding them from faving promifes, to wit, it confidereth them as scandalous, and unbecoming the Gospel whatever their state be, and so it may centure Believers, as the key of Doctrine may

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that out the most subtile hypocrite which the other cannot reach. Therefore also must it be a different account upon which Discipline doth admit, or reftore men to outward priviledges, and absolve men from outward Censures, than that upon which the Word doth admit to faving priviledges. And feine this last is fincere faith and repentance, the other must have somewhat different from this, upon the account whereof it doth give right, which can be no other thing than the moral fincerity mentioned. 5. Upon these differences followes another (which doth con firm all the former) to wir, a diversity that is in the manner of binding and loofing by thele two keys for, when a Minister useth the key of Doctrine, he doth exclude from heaven and faving priviledges bu conditionally, and he can warrantably exclude in particular professour absolutely; So no Ministe can absolve absolutely, by the key of Doctrine, bu conditionally, to wit, if the person believeth tha he speaketh unto ; for, it runneth on these terms If thou believest, thou shalt be saved. But, again in the exercise of the key of Discipline it is not se no Church-judicatory doth debar a man priviledges conditionally, if he believe nor, bu absolutely he is debarred because of some presen scandal; and although the person were or should become a real Believer, yet he continueth boun from outward priviledges by the key of Discipline untill that scandal be removed : So when they re ceive any into Church-communion, they do not al folve them from their former Censure, and give then right to Church-priviledges upon condition they be lieve, but absolutely that Censure is removed, and the are admitted unto these priviledges.

If it be asked, What is the reason of this difference betwixt these two keys? Answ. It is, first, because the ground upon which we loose and bind with the key of Discipline, is something obvious to men view, wherein they may warrantably judge an proceed, and therefore that is done absolutely: Bu

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Ift 2. in the key of Doctrine it is not fo; for , men cannot other tell who really believe, and who not, and it cannot erent by judicial proofs be made out, Therefore they canr renot bind or loofe but conditionally. Secondly, God men hath committed the outward man to be the object of the Discipline, but the inner man and conscience is refeing served to the Word and Doctrine, and men have not gotten authority over consciences and hearts; Therefore what concerneth the outward man, and outward priviledges, may be determined absolutely. But what concerneth the conscience and inner man only conditionally, because He hath reserved the absolute decision of that to himself, Therefore there is a fixth keys:
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inifte difference also. The word may and doth bind indefinitly, that is, persons so and so qualified, without making application in binding or loofing to individual persons, and doth not so bind or loose but condictionally, as is said; But Discipline striketh at individual persons, and as such, doth not otherwayes affect : for suppose an indefinite Sentence of Excommunication, against persons so qualified, to be pronounced, it doth debar none from Church-priviledges, as it is such; and for what influence it hath further, it is as it cometh under the key of Doctrine, which doth bind or loofe such but not as it is under the key of Discipline, and that for the reasons mentioned.

From these grounds we may see how warrantable and necessary it is to put difference betwixt saiving grace, which is the condition upon which the key of Doctrine absolveth, and serious profession, and a fair inoffensive carriage, which is the condition upon which the key of Discipline absolveth: And we may see also what absurdities would follow the confounding of these. And indeed we see no other way how these two keys may be kept distinct, but this.

To fum up this, from what is faid, we may, ninthly, conclude, If every fimulat profession be not sufficient, and if gracious fincesity be not to be enquired for, Then this moral fincerity and amendment is to be accepted as fatisfying, and that which properly

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Church indicatories are to enquire in , for a fourth cannot be conceived. But the former is truth Ergs, &c.

Laftly, That which was farisfying for giving acceffe to the Ordinances amongst the Jews after uncleannesses most be farisfying now for removing of offences; Bur fuch a ferious profession was fatisfying then : For it cannor be denied that there was a feparating of some for uncleannesse from the Ordinances; and it is at large and throngly made our by that learned vindicater of Church-government and Discipline, Mr. Gillefpie, that there was separation for moral uncleannesse; Buc however, ceremonial uncleannelle did then prove ground enough of exclusion, because so the Law of God had appointed it, even as now He hath appointed other groffe finpers to be cast-out. 2. It is clear, That there was fome facisfaction required out walking, offering of facrifices, and fuch like, before they could be admitted. 2. It cannot be faid, that a mocking, palpable, irreverent manner of performing these things would have been accepted by the Prioft, but would have been more offentive; nor yet can any fay, that enquiry was made after their end, principles, or graciousnesse of their act; So the assumption is clear Neither can the connexion of the minor be denied, if we confider, r. That there was no lesse moral holinesse called for from the lews, than from us. 2. That there was as great external firidinelle for keeping-up the fanctity of external Wership. 3. If we consider that their Ordinances and ours are materially the fame. 4. If we consider that Christ, even in respect of the external administration of His Kingdom and Difcipline, is not more rigid or restricted in His admitting to priviledges now, nor then, yea, that He is even in that more condescending to us under the days of the Gospel. 5. If we may reason from the Lord's manner of admitting unto His Church then, to His admitting unto the Church now upon the same qualifications that were fatisfying then, Then we may also conclude from what was satisfying then for the admitting

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admitting of perions excluded, unto the admitting of them now; and this is fully made-out, befide othersby worthy Mr. wood, in that fore-cited folid and learned Treatife, and before him, (to which he relateth) by learned Mr. Baxter, in his dispute with Tombs.

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CHAP. IX.

Concerning what is to be done, when men appear neither serious nor obstinate.

T may be now asked, What is to be done in reference to those who, after some grosse offences, can neither be counted thus ferious, nor yet obstinate? Ans. Such cases may be frequent; Concerning which we fay, 1. That it is neither fit altogether to absolve them, as being fully fatisfied, nor yet to proceed to the highest Sentence with them, nor to leave them altogether without a rebuke. But, in the second place, we say, That it is fit to proceed to rebuke them according to the direction, 17im. 5. 20. Because, 1. This rebuke may be a mean, through God's bleffing, to humble them, and to restrain such an offence. And, 2. it is also useful in reference to others, although the mans own carriage and acknowledgment be not every way fatisfying; for, the Apostle's direction to rebuke him openly, doth respect more the offence past and the fruit that may follow to him and others, than any present satisfying frame in the person to be rebuked.

When it is found meet thus publickly to rebuke, How is a the circumstances and manner are to be adverted to, publick re-Although the defigning of a particular place be buke to be not in it felf necessary, nor in every case expedient, given. yet for the folemnity of the reproof, it is not unfuitable, it being such as is rather accommodated for the edification of the whole Congregation, than otherwife pointed at as a place of pennance or punishment, or yet as a mark of reproach, and fuch like, which wrongeth the nature of Christ's Ordinance;

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And circumfrances would be fo ordered at the appearance of that may be eschewed. 2. It would be gone about with much gravity and reverence in re-spect of all that are concerned. The Minister especially is to carry weightily and authoritatively , having words fitted for the edifying of the Congregation, the humbling of the person, the convincing of both, and for the credit and weight of Christ's Ordinance before all; The party rebuked would minde whose Ordinance it is, and be fuitably affected as the receiving of a particular rebuke from Jesus Christ doch call for; The on-lookers also would be grave, having respect to Christ's Ordinance, tenderness to the person offending, but indignation at the offence; and this would be testified by their carriage, so as thereby the authority and folemnity of all may have the deeper framp upon the person. And for attaining of this fomething would be gravely spoken to the hearen as their use thereof, according to the case; and may be that some addresse to God in prayer together in reference thereto, before or after the rebuke, would not be unufeful for that end.

If it be al-Speak.

If it be asked, if speaking in publick by the perfor wayes ne- rebuked be be alwayes necessary? Answ. 1. Although ceffarythat it may be often useful and expedient, yet in ordina the offender ry rebukes, for ordinary scandals, where no contempt hath preceded, we conceive it not fimply necessary 1. Because, though the rebuke be clear in the Word yet is not this by the same evidence, alwayes requi-2. Their appearing to receive it, hath an implicitaffent to, and acceptation of it. 3. The effect of the rebuke is rather to be gathered from their after carriage, for it hath with it an obliging weight to them, and a virtual certification before the people, whether they expresse any thing or not. Beside, every one cannot edifyingly speak, and in that case, the Ministers rebuke is appointed to edific others, and to remove that offence from them.

Yet there are two cases especially wherein we think this is expedient and necessary unto edification, ie apld be in respecinaving o, the , and

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I. When either by the atrocity of fome offence, or continuance in contempt, a person hath been in proceffe towards Excommunication; or, when there is a relapse after a former rebuke ; in such cases it is for the edification of the people, to know upon what grounds the Eldership doth fift from proceeding; And engagements publickly and explicitly taken on before a Congregation, are often more weighty to the person. And if there be a failing, there is the greater evidence against them for after proceeding.

2. Suppose there hath been some Sentence binding or shuring out the person formerly, in that case, we conceive, speaking in publick to be necessary for confirming the people in their love to him again, which was hazarded by this former evident fall; and an implicit accepting of a reproof is not fufficient in fuch a

cale.

There may be also other cases, as suppose one hath been carried away with error, which he hath frequently vented before men, or in some such case where it may be edifying to have it from the parties own mouth, especially if the person be in such a frame, or of such ability, as by so doing he may edihe. But this is to be decided by the prudence of the overfeers.

If it be asked again, how is he to be accounted of How is an after this rebuke? We answer, Even as by some competent continuance of time, he doth discover the feriousnesse, or unseriousness of his profession. So that if he relapse, he is the more inexcusable, and to be proceeded with in due manner: but if he take up himself, and carry to the view of others seriously, he is not to be accounted as scandalous, because it cannot be faid, that he hath refused to hear the Church in that publick admonition: and a publick rebuke doth not of it lelf bind any and thut them out as scandalous, (yea, it giveth not ground for it, if obstinacy followeth not) but if it be heakened unto, and received, it doth prevent that, it being a right fatiffying part of Christianity to admit of, and to improve

offender to be reckoned after a re-

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prove a rebuke. Yet we think it incumbent to Church-judicatories, after some competent time, to enquire in the after carriage of such, and so accordingly to determine, whether they have fatisfyingly accepted of the admonition, or not. And that therefore the person so rebuked, ought to have such a Sentence before he can plead full admission to all priviledges, if at the time his profession was not fatisfying. This is uleful for the persons behove, when he knoweth he is still to be looked upon in a special manner, as a fickly member of the body. And it is also agreeable to reason; for, if when a private person giveth an admonition he be to judge of the fruit of it, whether it be satisfying; and if the Church-judicatory, when they admonish judicially, be to weigh, whether the effects be fatisfying or not : So by the like reason, when an admonition is publickly given, ought they to enquire what hath followed, and if that be fatisfying or not.

If an offence may at first instant be brought to publick.

If it be asked, if in no case an offender may be brought immediately to publick, but by the former steps, and upon supposition that these be fruitlesse? Anf. It may be in these two or three cases, 1. When the offence, being of a groffe nature, is publick and open, fo that many are in hazard to be infected, in that case a private rebuke would not be sufficient: Because, respect is to be had to the good of others. And so in some cases, even though as to the persons own conviction and carriage, a Church-judicatory may be fatisfyed; yet there is a necessity for the reafon foresaid of a publick rebuke. Yet every offence that is known to moe than one is not to be accounted an offence of this nature: Because from that word of Chriffs; Take with thee two or three witneffes, &c. it is evident, that even after those are made acquaint with the scandal, it is not publick, except obstinacie follow. Yea, it would appear, that such a scandal might be known to others, when yet one private perfon might only admonish; and if the admonition were accepted, might first. And in case the fact be denied, r to

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nied when he is thereafter to bring two or three conjunct witnesses, who may convince the party offending of the truth of the fact, as well as of the nature thereof, by their joynt tellifying that the party offended had reason to seek satisfaction in such a thing: Otherwayes, if that were only a private offence which is known to one, supposing the party offending to deny the fact, there were no accesse to an offended brother to purfue the fame, and by witnesses to make icout, if his private admonition should be rejected. And this may be one reason also why those two or three are called witnesses, whose part is to confirm the matter of fact, as the Law cited there to that purpose doth evidene. Nor is it alway necessarily thus publick when it is made known to a Churchofficer or a Church-judicatory, because in that case, even they may find it more edifying to admonish privately then publickly; And it is their part rather to hinder the spreading of a scandal, than to make the same needlesly more publick. An offence then that When is to be accounted publick; that is, which is fo in re- offence is to spect of its notority or publicknesse, and such as is be accountnot the object of private admonition, but whereof a ed publick. Church-judicatory is immediatly to take notice, may be confidered in respect of its first instant, or in respect of some following circumstance; for what is required in the nature of the finitefelf, hath been spoken to already. It is publick in the first respect, 1. When it is done before fo many as probably cannot be fatisfied with private admonition, fo that thereby there is a hazard to many to be scandalized. 2. It is publick, when it feemeth to be done with contempt and an high hand, as if a person were owning the same; Thus a scandal that hath sewer witnesses, may be accounted publick, when another, it may be, actually known to as many, is not to be accounted such, because in this case there is no accesse to private admonition, the person being like a swine, ready to turn on the admonisher. Thus suppose Abfoliom's incest had not been adually known to many,

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yet the very circumflances of his doing it openly, and purpolly that it might be known, made it of a publick nature: Thus fometimes it is more necessary to take notice of an offence committed in a publick place, though, it may be, few know the fame than of a thing done more privately, because as to them it might have been publick to many; and it sheweth an humour and corruption that is beyond private admonition, when a thing is so circumftantiated. 2. Sometimes offences will have an horrour, and in indignation wakened against them, even in respect of such circumstances, as to be drunk, lascivious, and such like are offences; but to be fo in a Market-place, or in publick ffreets, even supposing it to be in a day when few do actually fee it, doth waken an indignation in the hearts of fober men, as being an affront to Religion and Order, and inconfiftent with Chriflianity and Civility, much more than if it had been in a private place, or privately; for, that is before the Sun to do fo, as Zimries act was, which provoked Phinea's zeal. 4. An offence is publick, when it is generally accounted to be a certain truth, and not a fuspicion only; as being a thing in its evidence known to fo many (befide what is reported to others) that it cannot be supposed that an ingenuous mind can have accesse to deny or shift the same, without some indignation in the hearts of those that know it. 5. Sometimes an offence is to be accounted publick when though it may be many are not witnesses thereof, yet when many are in hazard to be infected thereby; as suppose those witnesses to be such as cannot rest quiet in a private satisfaction, but they have either spread it, or are in hazard to spread it, and, it may be, long afterward they make it a ground of reproach: In this case it becomenh a scandal not only to the first witnesses, but also to those to whom it is reported; So that although it was not at first publick, yet it becometh so by the rumour thereof. This infectiousness may also proceed from the time wherein it is comitted, the person who committeth it, the nature

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nature of the fact that is committed, (which may more readily infnare others than facts of some other nature) from those also before whom it was committed; Therefore in such cases it is necessary that

publick notice be taken thereof.

Therefore, in the second place, we faid that some offences not very publick in respect of the fact, yet may, by some concurring circumstances, by such as the bringing of them in publick, may be necessary for the edifying of the Church at such a time, then that way is to be taken; As suppose, i. that such a fin is in some places scarce counted a fin; Or, 2, If it be fecretly and frequently in use among others; Or, a. If the perion found guilty be generally suspected of loofe and untender walking in such things, although particulars be not publick; Or, 4. if they be under falle pretexts of tendernelle, ready to feduce others to something finful, or in the like cases. In which, though the fact be not so publick, yet the scandal, or hazard, and the benefit of a rebuke are publick; and therefore that way is to be followed, Because they are necessary for the edifying of the Church, which is the end wherefore publick rebukes are appointed. The same may be said of atrocious horrible crimes, which being but known to few, yet are not to be, nor cannot be past with a meer private admonition, such as witchcraft, incest, &c. which are defiling fins, the bringing whereof in publick doth honour God the avenger and discoverer of such works of darknetle, suppose also, that the evidencing of somewhat, may serve to remove some former prejudice, as if it had been thought that an innocent perfon had been father of fuch a child, or actor of fuch a murther; if God bring it about, that those who truly are guilty be discovered, it is not to be keeped close, because it is the removing of a former flumbling-block, and may keep others from finning in mis-judgeing an innocent, and it also glorifieth God whose wise way is to be observed in such dispenfations.

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2. Although a fact be not publick, year, in some cales although it be not true that there hath been any ground of offence given: Yet, 1, If the report of fuch an act be publickly rumoured; Or, a. if such presumptions thereof be publick, which are ready to leave the impression of the thing; Or, 3. If the same or brute of fuch a thing be come to such an height, that either it be believed by many to be true, (and that by such who are neither too fimply credulous without all prefumptions, nor malitious or infected with prejudice in reference to the person) Or, suppose that a person is accounted to be habitually in secret evils, the riping up whereof might be edifying in fuch. and such like cases, a Church-judicatory is at the first inflant to meddle with, and enquire in the tame because, although possibly there may be no ground, yet the offence is great, and may flumbly many as if it were fo: and the neglecting thereof cannot but be offensive, whereas inquiry therein is useful, whether the fame be grounded or not. But in this there would be great tendernesse and prudence used in confidering, both upon whom, by whom, and upon what occasion the report is raised and entertained, and whether dipping therein be edifying or not.

3. Upon supposition that private persons be defective in giving admonitions, or following of them before a Church-judicatory, and yet there be pregnant prefumptions of miscarriages in such and such perions, although they be not publick; or, suppose, through fear, ill grounded affection, or other carnal respects, others should concur to keep from publick view the offences of some person, to the stumbling of themselves, in becoming partakers of their fin, and to the prejudice of others: I fay, in fuch like cafes, a Church-judicatory is to enquire into the carriage of fuch a person, and to put others to declare and testifie therein, although they be not complained of, and although the Scandal be not fo every way obvious: Because admonition is needful both for the good of the person offending, and of others also: and when

private

private persons become desective, Church-officers are bound rather to interpoleimmediately than to suffer such a person to continue under sin, to the hazard of himself and others; for, they must either do it, or it is to be left undone, which would be a stumbling-block to many, and strengthen wickednesse exceedingly, in case untender men sell only to be accessory to the knowledge of the offences of each other (as often it is) yet though it be necessary for a Church-judicatory to interpose, it is not alwayes necessary to bring the matter to a publick rebuke, but as from consideration of the thing, person, or, other circumstances it shall be thought six to rest in a private admonition or not.

From which we may see the necessity of processing parties, and leading witnesses (in case the matter be denied) without any particular accuser or delater; because in such cases, either publick Scandal of the thing, the nature of the Church-officers overlight, or the edification of the body, which they are to prefer to every thing, do require that such a thing or

person be put to trial.

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CHAP. X.

Clearing whether in Church-processes an Accuser be always necessary.

Fit be asked, concerning an accuser, Whether it be necessary in all Church-processes, that one, under such a consideration, be fixed, before there can be proceeding against any party, in reference to trials

We answer in these affertions,

After. I. It is not alwayes necessary in every case that there should be a formal particular accuser, as may appear from the cases formerly instanced; for that any offence or offender should passe without being taken notice of, (especially if offences be continued in) as contrary to the end for which Church-censures are appointed, and yet neither de facts is there alwayes

an acculer where there is an offence; nor de jure can any be confirmed to be an acculer: therefore it is necessary that in some cases there must be a processe without an acculer, in this way of enquiry.

Affer, 2. When an offended Brother followeth Christs way in pursuing an offence, he is not to be accounted an accuser formally, as the terme of acculation uleth properly to be taken : Because, 1.To accuse often is a thing that may be omitted, but this kind of pursuit is laid on as a necessary duty. 2. To accuse, respects some particular wrong and injury usually, and the following thereof, importeth a prejudice and hurt to the party accused. But this which respects offence without any particular injury, proceedeth from love, tendeth to the advantage and recovery of the parry, and to properly cannot be called accusation. Yea 2. When a person hath followed the fecond step, and made out his private admonition by two or three witnesses when he cometh to the Church with them neither of them can be accounted accusers more than when he did privately speak to the person, or after that to those witnesses, because all is dutie. and a piece of that Christian mutual communion. that brethren and members of the fame body, owe one to another, and to the body in common; yet is he who so entreth a complaint, obligged to make it evident to the Judicatory; and if he hath rightly performed the second step, and made it appear before two or three, there is no hazard or difficultie in this; but if he hath failed in that, he ought not to have proceeded to this.

Affer. 3. We say that to have a formal accuser, seemeth not so well to agree to the nature of ecclessaftick processes, and looketh like a civil Court. For, a. If the offence be publick, there is no accuser needful, as is said. 2. If it be private, no accuser is to be heard, but in the ordinary method, because Christs Ordinance is not to be subservient to mens passions, or to be the mean of their seeking revenge for injuries: And therefore in some cases, though an accuser would

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undertake the purliing of fome procelle againfly person, where neither the Scandal is fligrant, nor the party accused, after private admonition and conviction, obstinate, in that case the accusation might be rejected; because so the accuser looketh nor like a Brother, that is flumbled, feeking the gaining of the other, and his own fatisfaction upon that account, but rather like a person that is irritate, vindictive or malicious to whose humour Church-officers ought not to give way; neither doth fuch an acculation become Christs Court. Yet, if the thing be indeed scandalous, Church-officers are to enquire therein, and nor to fleight any mean of evidence which may be had. left profane perions mouths be opened ; but that rixal and contentious way of following of processes by particular accusers, against particular persons, as useth to be in other Courts, we conceive no way becoming the gravity and convincing way that ought to be in this; And we suppose in experience is not often found to be edifying, but rather doth ingender hatred, prejudice, contention, and fuch like, which is altogether contrary to Christs scope.

Again, on the other fide, there may be no particular accuser against the person, and yet it be necessary

that he be tried, as hath been faid.

Affer. 4. There may be some cases in which it is expedient to admit an accuser, and not to admit a proceffe without one. As suppose one were under no ill report, and yet some grosse scandal were imputed to him, which were not of such fame, or had not fuch prefumptions, as to give ground for a Churchjudicatory immediately to interpole, and the leandal being of fuch a nature as the trial thereof could neither be omitted, nor closed in private; in that case, suppose one should complain of the Churches negligence in the same, afferting the evidences to be clear, and offering to make them out; In such a case, I say, the Church can hardly refuse to hear him, lest they be thought partial; nor is there ground, nor is it fit for them immediately to purfue it: Therefore an acculer

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culer is expedient, that fo, upon the one fide, the Churches impartiality may be vindicated, in refusing the complaint of no sober man, nor the uttermost of any trial, that in well grounded reason they may expect; And, on the other side, that the mouths of some needlesse and too importunate complainers may be stopped; and they themselves sound censurable, if either without cause they traduce the Church-officers as negligent and partial, while there is accesse to make out before them such a truth, if it be truth; or if precipitantly and inconsiderately (if not maliciously) they have tabled a scandal against another as a publick scandal, which they cannot make out, and so have needlessy troubled a Church-judicatory in such a matter, and sinfully wronged their neighbour.

For, a processe in such cases where it cannot be made out, is scandalous: therefore if a person rest not fatisfied, to as to abstain till he have trial put to the utmost, he is to be dealt with as a scandalous person, left men take liberty, under the pretext of pursuing offences, to defame others, and abuse the Ordinance of Christ. And though it be just in such a case, that he be materially dealt with as unjust accusers use to be in civil courts, yet this doth not only flow from the confideration of such a persons being a formal accufer, but from the nature of the deed which is scandalous in such a measure, and that publickly, and therefore is to be reffrained, whether the person take on him that formal confideration or not, left yet, upon the matter, he continue publickly and importunately to presente pursuit. And we conceive, the imposing the title of accuser in such a case, or the making of it necessary, that one take on him that formal notion, is rather for conveniencie to restrain mens inordinatenesse, and stop their mouths, and to add weight to the matter of the sentence, if they fail, than as being fimply necessary for making such a person to be accounted scandalous, if he come short.

CHAP. XI.

concerning what is to be done when the complaint is of some enjury done to the complainer.

Here is one case yet to be enquired in, viz. how I to account of a particular person his complaining or pursuing an offence which carrieth with it a particular enjury unto himfelf? As suppose, that fuch a person did calumntate him, calling, him false, covetous, hypocrite, thief, or such like, or did imprecate curies unto him? Anfw. 1. If the way laid down were followed, and a publick complaint made the last step, it may be, there would be few of these complaints. Of this we have spoken already. 2. Although such enjuries have with them a spiritual hure alfo, and fo indeed are real flumbling-blocks to the spiritual state of the party enjured. Yet, 1, it is hard for men enjured, fingly to abstract the scandal given them from the enjury done them, and fo to follow the offence with respect to their own and the others edification, as to entertain no thoughts of revenge in the pursuing thereof : for certainly, often it is the reparation of a wrong, and to vindicate folks own name and credit, rather than edification, which in such cases is aimed at : Therefore we find ever the most irreligious, carnal and proud persons, hotest in fuch a pursuit, and with greatest difficulty to be fatiffied; and the fatisfaction intended by them, is not any Christian gaining often, but some publick shame, or fuch like: And therefore if that follow, although the person fall over again in many other scandals that are worse, or others shall fin more grosly; yet that flirreth them not, neither are their complaints in such cases heard of. 2. We find, that such a case hath often great difficulties with it, and readily much hear and carnalneffe; yea, in things that are personal between parties, it is more difficult for them to abstam from carnainefie, or the appearance thereof, and also for Church-

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Church-judicatories to walk fo as not to be thought partial to one of the fides, and fo by intending the removal of one offence, more may be given. Therefore we would hippofe fuch a procedor to be furtable to Christs order and. ordinance ; 1. That as much as may be, these personal things may be waved by private persons themselves who are so offended. Certainly men lofe not by condescending in their particulars, and it my afterward tend more to the convincing of the party and others, and to the vindicating of themselves that they sorbear (at least, vill the feryour be abated, both in them and in the offending party) than by kindling of their own paffions by the paffions of others, to hazard upon more fin and offence. 2. When such things occur, its fit that Churchofficers should endeavour to compose and to remove them privately; yea, if any complaint come in a persons heat, that yet notwithstanding, means be used to compose and allay the same; and if that fail, that the scandal be brought to publick, rather by the Eldership it self, than by the party offended, because to the thing, as fcandalous, may be more abftractedly confidered, the person easitier convinced, and the heat of parties prevented, which often mar the beauty of the Ordinance, and so there is nothing overfeen that ought to be redressed. 3. If persons will needs enter their own complaint, Then it would be enquired, 1. Whether it be really the enjury to their name, or outward condition that swayeth them ? or, if it be the offence, that is, the flumbling-block that goeth alongst therewith, and is ready to hurt their spiritual eftate, that doth move them? This question is fit for curbing of carnal humours, and keeping the Ordinance of Christ from being abused, and made subfervient to mens finful paffrons.

If it cannot be hid, that it is the injury which affects them, Then would they be admonished for that, and remitted to follow their injury otherwise, and to pardon it, as to any vindictive humour ; yet the thing as it is scandalous, would be stil followed without them. eht

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2. It would be enquired, if they followed the private fteps ? And, 2. what fort of farisfaction they aim at, and if it be the parties, gaining that they leek with their own fatisfaction ?

Sometimes there arifeth a new difficulty in fuch what, when cases as suppose one complained of for calumniate a calumniaing another, should offer to make good his word; or tor comwhat he hath faid; Im fuch a case it is difficult for a plained of, Church-Judicatory to carry rightly, if probation be offereth to refused, the flanderous mouth is not stopped, And make it out. to admit it, it feemeth neither pertinent nor profitable to any Church-end. This sometimes is one of the evils of making Church-judicatories the stage of mens passions: Yet in such a case we say, 1. That whether the thing be true or not, the casting of it up at fuch a time, and with such circumstances, was offensive; and therefore no following probation can exempt the offender from being accounted scandalous. because the end of bringing forth that, was really the hurt of his brother, and neither private nor publick edification. 2. Some manner of offered probation is indirect, (as also some fort of flandering) as, suppole one would complain of another as guilty of theft, or some other fin, and give for the ground thereof some infrances of corruption or deceir in their trade of merchandizing, or taking some advantage by law or otherwayes, to the hurt of another. Thefe are causes and matters wherein properly Church-officers are neither fit nor called to decide; and the event thereof doth depend upon some civil contest, therefore are not meet to be admitted as the ground of a complaint or probation in a Church-judicatory. Again, some manner of probation is more direct, as suppose one would prove by witnesses direct thest upon another, Yet confidering that Church-judicatories are not to be sub-servient to mens passions, as hath been said, and also, that their end ought ever to be edification, and there being no probable ground to expect it in such a processe, we conceive it were fit altogether to wave fuch contests. For, though there

be a fluoring of offenders allowed in Church-difelpline, yet it looketh harsh-like to make it the mean of bringing civil shame and infamie upon any; Because such a blot, as to be accounted or declared infamous, even as to civil things, is a civil punishment; and therefore is not to be the effect of a Church-judicatory, properly, Although we will not deny but by accident, these may be sometimes necessarily joyn-

what if a profane offending con refule to give fatisfaction.

It may be asked, What if an offending party appearing, professe repentance for their fault, &c. as hath been defired, and should yet refuse to give obefeffing party dience to such things and in such manner as is thought fit to be done by the Church-officers for the removing of the offence? Anjw. 1. It is not like that any who are ferious in their profession of repentance, will stand on such a thing; and where that is, it is too probable-like an evidence of their diffembling, if some convincing reason cannot be given by them for swaying to that refulal. 2. Their disobedience is either in material things, or such as are but circumstantial. Again, it is either done with contempt, or with professed contenued respect and a defire to satisfie. As for instance, some may refuse to receive a publick rebuke where edification requireth it, or to acknowledge their offence to an offended party, or they may be willing to appear, and willing to acknowledge their offence, but differ as to the time, place, manner, &c. For the first, Though a Church judicatory may wait for a time, yet can they not in some cases difpente with them, because otherwayes, they are not heard, nor is the end obtained; and therefore may processe proceed, especially if that disobedience look contemptuous-like: For the second fort of disobedience, to wit, in the manner or circumstances of giving facisfaction, although in this also, those that are ferious to have offences removed, will not readily flick, yet if it be, there is difference between this and the former, if there be no discernable evidences of contempt in it; and in this, no question, Church judicatories

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dicatories have a greater latitude to do as may edifie: wherein they are especially to take notice of these things, r. That by too much rigidity in circumflances, they feem not unnecessarily to wrong them. or to lay too much weight of fatisfaction upon fuch 2. That by too easie passing from such, formalities. they do not strengthen any to follow that example for the time to come. And, 3. that even in circumflances there be an equality in reference to these same scandals in all persons. And if there be hazard in reference to any of after these by condescending, to alter or forbear a circumftance in a publick rebuke, we conceive it is fafer to abstain from that forbearance, & not to yeeld it; and yet not fimply upon that account to purfue a processe, but to continue dealing with the person, while either he be convinced and brought, for the good of order and edification of the Church. to yeeld, or there be more clearnesse to do other-

CHAP. XII.

Concerning what ought to be done by private persons, when church-officers spare such as are scandalous.

TE come now to the last Question proposed, to wit, supposing that Church-officers should be defective in crying and censuring scandalous perfons, what is the duty of private Christians in such a case, and if norwithstanding, they ought to continue in the communion of fuch a Church, or to separate from her?

This Queftion hath troubled the Church, and been the occasion of many schisms in many ages, the devil thereby under pretext of indignation at offences, hath made them to abound in the Church, as the Churchhistories and Writings of the Fathers, in what concerneth the Novatians, Donatiffs, and such like, do fully evince; And although we have great ground to acknowledge Gods mercy, in the fobriety of His people

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people amongst us, so that we have unity, with puricy; yet, leing in order this doth follow, we shall

answer, shortly, in laying down these grounds.

1. It cannot be denied, but such a case may be, and often de facto is, that Church-officers are defective in the exercifing of Discipline upon scandalous persons, what from pegligence, what from unfaithfulnelle, what from fainting or some other finful infirmity at the best, as may be gathered from the second and third Chap-

ters of the Revelation.

2. Though this be true, yet possibly it is not alwayes their fault when it is charged on them: as suppole, 1. That no private person, or, possibly even the complainer, hath admonished such persons as are counted scandalous, nor have given-in sufficient proofs of their scandal to any Church-judicatory; or, it may be, many are counted scandalous who cannot legally and judicially be found to be such; for it is more easie to assert a scandal, than to prove, even often when it is true: and it being rather a ground of irritation than edification, when a processe is entred, and not convincingly made-out, Therefore often in duty some processes are abstained. Sometimes also Church-officers may be faithfully dealing with perfons to recover them from scandals, and yet not find it fit for edification to proceed to high Censures; In fuch cases. Church-officers cannot reasonably be blamed, and those who complain would pose their own consciences, if they have exonered themselves and done their duty, and have put it to the Officers doors, before they account their fault; And it is most unbecoming for persons to charge others and to be defective in their own duty, which necessarily inferreth the other. And if it were as difficult and weighty a task to calumniate and groundlefly to charge Church-officers with this, as it is, faithfully to follow private admonition, there would not be fo much of the one, and so little of the other. And if it be rightly looked to, it will not be easie to charge them with groffe defects (and if they be not groffe,

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the exercise of Discipline as in other things) for, that must be upon one of these accounts, either, 1. Becaule such scandalous persons, after resusing of private admonitions, were complained of to them, and that evidence of the fact was offered, and Church-officers

refused to put the same to trial : Or , it must be because when they did try, they did determine such a thing to be no scandal, or not to be proven, or that (supposing it to be proven) they did not censure it; or, at least, when scandals were open and obvious, and palpable, they did not take notice of them. Now,

is it probable that such a Church-judicatory will frequently be found that will fail grofly either of thefe wayes? And if they do, then their is accesse to convince them, by an appeal to a superiour Court, which in that case is a duty. If it be said, that their failing and neglect, is, in some covered manner, so carried-on as there is no accesse to such legal complaints. Assw. 1. We suppose if the things be that groffe, and the

fact to clear and frequent, as that there be just ground to complain, then there will be also accesse to such a proof. 2. If it be so carried and not owned, then it may be their fin before God; but it is not to be accounted a proper Church-offence in the fence beforementioned, feing they could not be convinced judicially even before the most impartial Judge. And as

in such a case we cannot account a private brother ecclefiaftically scandalous, although the general strain of his way may be diffatisfying to us, So ought we not to account this; for, there is a great difference, betwixt that which may be offensive to a persons private discretion, and put him possibly in a christian way to defire fatisfaction, and that which is to be

noised as a publick Church-scandal.

Affert. 3. Upon supposition that the defect be true, yet private professors are to continue in the discharge of the duties of their stations, and not to separate from the Communion of the Church, but to count themselves exonered in holding fast their own inte-

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grity. It's true, it cannot but be heavie to those that are tender, and, if it become scandalously exceffive, may give occasion to them to depart and go where that Ordinance of Discipline is more vigorous; and concerning that, there is no question, it being done in due manner; Yet, I say, that that can be no ground for withdrawing from the Ordinances of Christ, as if they or their consciences were polluted by the presence of such others. For, 1. That there were fuch defects in the Church of the Jews, cannot be denied, and particularly doth appear in the inflance of Elie's fons, who made the Ordinances of the Lord contemptible with their miscarriages; yet that either it was allowable to the people to withdraw, or faulty to joyn in the Ordinances, can no way be made out. If it be faid, there was but one Church then, Therefore none could separate from the Ordinances in it? Anim. 1. This doth confirm what is fald, to wit, that the joyning of feandalous persons in Ordinances, doth not pollute them to others; for if fo, the Lord had not laid such a necessity upon those that were tender, that they behoved to partake of polluted Ordinances, or to have none; and if it did not pollute them then, some reason would be given that doth evidence it now to do fo. 2. If there be an unity of the Church now, as well as then, then the consequence must be good; because, so where ever folks communicate, those many that communicate any where, are one bread, and one body, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. 10.17. compared with chap 12. 13. And fo by communicating any where, we declare our felves to be of the same visible Church and politick body, with those who communicate elswhere, even as by Baptilim we are baptized into one Church, and into communion with all the members of the body any where. And therefore, if this be confidered, it will not be enough to eschew pollution (if the objection be true and well grounded) to separate from one Society, or one particular Congregation, except there be a separation from the whole visible Church;

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for fo also lews might have separated from particular Synagogues, or have choosed times for their offerings and facrifices diffinct from others. Famous Cotton of New England, in his Holineffe of Churchmembers, pag. 21. grants that there were many fcandalous persons in the Church of the Jews. 2. He faith, that that was by the Priefts defect, for they ought not to have been retained. And, 3. though he fay that that will not warrand the lawfulneffe of admitring scandalous persons to the Church, yet he afferteth, that it may argue the continuance of their Church-effate notwithstanding of such a toleration; and if so, then it approveth continuing therein, and condemneth separation therefrom; and consequently a Church may be a Church, having the Ordinances in purity, and to be communicate in, notwithflanding of the former fault. 2. What hath been marked out of Learned Writers, for paralleling the constitution of the Church under the Gospel, with that under the Law in eliential things, doth overthrow this objection; for now separation is as impossible as formerly.

2. This defect is to be observed in several of the Primitive Churches, as we may particularly fee in the second and third Chapters of the Revelation, yet it is never found that any upon that account did withdraw, or were reproved for not doing fo, even when the Officers were reproved for defect: Yea, on the contrary, these who keeped themselves pure from these Scandals, though continuing in that communion, are commended and approven, and exhorted to continue as formerly. Now, if continuing in communion in such a case be of it self finful, and personal integrity be not infficient to profesiours where the defect is finful to the Officers, even though in other perfonal things and duties of their stations they were approveable, How can it be thought that the faithful and true Witnesse should so sharply reprove the one, and to fully approve the other at the fame time?

3. The nature of Church-communion doth con-

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firm this, because such influence hath the scandalous nesse of one to make another guilty, as the approven conversation of the other hath to make the Ordinances profitable to him that is scandalous, for we can no otherwise partake of the evil than of the good of another in Church-communion; But it is clear, that the gracionfnesse of one cannot sanctifie an Ordinance to one that is profane; and therefore the profanity of one cannot pollute the Ordinance to one that is tender. And, as he that examineth himself, partaketh worthily in respect of himself and his own condition, but doth not fanctifie communicating to another; So, he that partaketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself., and not to another: and for that cause, is both the precept and the threatning bounded, Let a man examine himself, one. For, be that eateth and drinkerb unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; for, upon doing or omitting of duty in himself, doth follow worthy, or unworthy communicating to him. And if in the most near conjugal fellowship, the company of a profane Husband may be sanctified to a gracious Wife, even when hers is unfanctified to him, (because that dependeth upon the persons own qualification and way of usemaking of Gods Ordinance of marriage) much more may it be here : this last might be a distinct argument of it lelf.

4. If continuance in communion with fuch perfons be finful, Then it must either be because communion with fuch as are profane indeed, whether we know or think them to be fo or not, is finful; or, it must be because we know them, or think them to be fuch; But neither of these can be said : Not the first, because so to keep communion with an hypocrite, or a Believer in a carnal frame, were finful, although we thought them to be fincere, which cannot be pleaded: nor can it be faid, it is because we know them to be so, Because, 1. If we knew a man to be so, and another knew not, in that case, the Ordinances were polluted to one, and not to another, at

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the fame time, though possibly both were exercising the fame faith, and having examined themselves. were in the same frame, which were absurd. Year 1. If it depended on our knowledge of it, Then our very supposing it to be so, although it were not so, would pollute the Ordinance; and what confusion would be there .. may be afterward hinted. Nor can is be fald, it is because we think so, because, suppofine some to think otherwise, it would be still an ordinance to them, and a duty to continue in it, and nor to us, which is the former aboutdity; and this doth not flow from the binding nature of an erroneous conscience (which may be alleged in other cases) but from the difference of persons light, charity, or other apprehensions of things, whereby one is induced to effeem that scandalous, which another doth not.

s. If communion with profane persons that are fuch to our knowledge be finful, and polluteth Ordinances, Then these things may be enquired, which will infer diverse abfurdities, 1. Ought persons to try all those that they keep communion with, whether they be profane or not? For, if any profane perfon be in that communion which they might have known if they had tried, then their ignorance cannot excuse: 2. It may be enquired, what degree of trial and fearch doth sufficiently exoner, because polfibly a further trial might have discovered some to be profane? 2. It may be enquired, what evidences may demonstrate persons to be scandalous, and make them to be so accounted of? If only something seen by themselves, or if something reported by others; and that whether it be judicially made out or only afferted? and how manies report is to be taken for proof; or if any that be so reported of, be so to be accounted? 4. What fort of scandals are to be enquired-in to make a person such as pullureth the Ordinances? If it be any kind of scandal, or but scandals of such a nature? If one scandal be sufficient, or if there must be many? and how many are to be

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leid weight upon in this? and fome fatisfying grounds how, and where to fix the difference, are to be laid down? 5. It may be asked, if one scandalous person alone doth pollute the Ordinances? or if there must be moe? and if so, How many? 6. Suppose such a scandal were known to us alone, charity, and Christs command do say, it is not to be published; conscience such in that case, the Ordinance is polluted, time straits either to communicate doubtingly, or with offence to abstain and hide the cause, or courtary to charity to signific the same. These and many such like things are requisit to satisfie one, upon this supposition, that communion in such a case is sinful, Therefore it is not to be admitted.

6. If the Ordinance be polluted to one that is clean, Then it is either the deed of the Church-officen that doth pollute it, or the deed of the scandalous person that doth communicate; But neither of these can be faid: Not the first, for that would suppose that all the Ordinances were polluted, although no feandalous person were present actually, because they were not actually excluded, and though they were absent, yet there being no impediment made to them by Church-officers, as to their guilt, it is the fame. Nor the fecond, Because, supposing a person not to be debarred, it is his duty to communicate; and can it be faid, that he in doing of his duty upon the matter, should make that not to be a duty to us, which lieth on by a joynt command, which requireth earing from him and from us, as it requireth praying?

7. The Lords ordering it so in His providence, that He admitteth unsanctified Officers to administrate His Ordinances, and yet withal, accounting them Officers, and the Ordinances in their hands to be His Ordinances, and that even when they are known to be unsound (rill in His own way they be removed) doth demonstrate this, that pollution in joynt worshippers doth not pullute the Ordinances to others. For, if any did pollute them, Then most of all scandalous Officers; But these do not. Ergo, &c. We may

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fee it, first, in the scandalousnesse of Priests under the Law ; for we must either say that there were no scandalous Priests, or that the people did then offer no facrifice and joyn in no worship, or that finfully they did it : All which are absurd. 2. We see in Christs time, the Scribes and Pharifees were pointed out by Him as scandalous, Mat. 22. v. 2. Yet even there doth He require continuance in the Ordinances administrate by them, notwithstanding. 2. Doth not Paul speak of some that preached out of envy. Philip. 1. 15. which is a most grosse scandal, and of others who fought their own things and not the things of Christ. Phil. 2. 21? Both which are groffe, and clearly evidenced by his testimony, yet is he content that people continue, yea, he supposeth that they may profit in communion with them, which he would not, had the Ordinances been polluted by them to others. And the same may be said of several Churches in these second and third Chapters of the Revelation, where both groffneffe of Ministers, and of many Profesfors. is notified by Christ to the Church, yet it cannot be supposed that that might have been made the ground of separation afterward from them, more than not doing of it was reprovable before.

8. If known evil in any that doth communicate, pollute the Ordinances in themselves. Then how can a Believer communicate with himself? Because. 1. he hath corruption, 2. He hath as ful knowledge of it as of any other mans, yea, that which may make him think it more than what he knoweth of any other man: 3. That corruption is as near bim as the corruption of any. 4. The Law doth more particularly strike against corruption in him as to himself, than that which is in any other. Yea, 5. this corruption doth certainly, in fo far pollute the Ordinance to him, and make him guilty. Now the same grounds that say he may communicate with a good conscience, notwithstanding of his own corruptions, will also say, he may communicate notwithflanding of that which is in another, much more:

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because the fins that follow his corruption are his own fins, which cannot be faid of the fins of others. And if repentance for his own fin , refting upon Christ, protesting against the body of death (which vet are but the acts of the fame person, in so far as renued, differing from himfelf as unrenued) If, I fav. fuch acts may quiet his conscience, and give him confidence to parrake, notwithstanding of his own corruption, and that even then when he as unrenued may be accounted guilty, may they not much more give him confidence in reference to the fins of another;

which are not fo much as his deeds.

9. In that directory which Christ giveth, Mat. 18. this is implied, because he doth warrand an offended brother to bring obstinate offenders to the Church, as the laft flep of their duty, and as their full exoneration, Tell the Church, faith he; and no more is required by him after that, but conforming of his carriage to the Churches Sentence in cafe of obstinacie. And none can think, upon supposition that the Church did nor their duty, that then they were from that forth, not to joyn in that Church, but to separate from them, as from heathers and publicans: because for particular person might Excommunicate a Church, whom yet Christ will not have to withdraw from communion with a private member, till obstinacle and the Churches centuring interveen; Yea, by to doing, a private person might account another a heathen and publican without any publick Censure, which is contrary to Christs scope, which subjoymeth this withdrawing of communion from him to the Churches Censure. This will bind the more if we confider that Christs words have an allusion (as is commonly acknowledged) to the Jewish Sanedrim, which being but one, could not admit of anyleparation from its communion, though there had been de feet in this: What may be done in abstaining of perfonal communion in unnecessary things, is ever to be acknowledged; yet if separation in such a supposed case, were called for as a duty, that direction would

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not be a fufficient direction for an offended brother. because it leaveth him without direction in the left flep : Yet Christs progresse so particularly from one flep to another, faith, that it is otherwayes intended.

Who would have more full facisfacion in this, may look the Learned Treatifes that are written against Separation, which will hold confequentially in this; and therefore we may here fay the leffe, And shall

only add the confideration of one Scripture.

For confirming of this Affertion then, we may take A particumore particular confideration of one place, which lar confidefeemeth more especially to relate to this purpose, That ration of is , I Corintb. II. from the 17. ver. foreward : Where I Cor. II. it doth appear, first, That there were divisions amongst 17, 0%. that people, even in respect of communicating together at the Lords Table, to that fome of them would not communicate with others: for that there were divisions is clear. Now, these divisions are expressed to be in the Church when they came together to eat the Lords Supper, ver. 18, and 19, and tome did communicate at one time, and fome at another, without arrying one for another, as is expressed, v. 22.

Secondly, We may also gather what might be the reason of this divided communicating, or, at least, what some might alleage why they would not communicate joyntly with others: For, it is like, they fell in this irregularity deliberately, as thinking they did well when they communicated appart, and not with others. So much is infinuated in the Apostles expostulation, ver. 22. What, shall I praise you in this? Ipraise you not. Now these reasons might be alleged, to justifie their divided communicating, 1. That the Ordinances were not reverently administred, nor with that gravity and discerning of the Lords Body, as was fit. 2. That many unworthy persons were admitted to communion, even fuch as were drunken, ver. 21, &c. and therefore it might be alleged by them, that joynt communicating with such was to be abstained.

Thirdly, It is evident also, That notwithstanding

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of these grounds, the Apostic doth condemn their practice, and preffeth them to joynt communicating, as appeareth from ver. 22. and 33. From which this clear argument doth arise, If the members of the Church of corinth, who did separate from the Ordinances, because of the finfulnesse of these that did joyntly parrake with them, were condemned by Paul and required to communicate joyntly, and if it be made clear by him how they might do so and not be guilty. Then separation in such a case cannot be a duty but a fin : But the former are true. Therefore, &c. I know nothing can be objected against this argument, but either to fay, That the Apostles scope is in that eating together, to regulate their love feafts, and to condemn their practice in thefe; or, that he commends joynt communicating fimply, but not in fuch mov a case, because it is not clear whether any of them shou did scruple upon that ground or not: for, the remov- fanis ing of these, we say to the first, That the main scope out of the place is to regulate them in going about the tarry Sacrament of the Lords Supper: And therefore it is This that the Apostle doth so clearly and plainly insist in by h clearing the institution thereof, thereby to bring them Iny by back to the way that was laid down and delivered to listhe him by the Lord. And for any other fort of eating or drinking, the Apostle doth send them to their corre houses, ver. 22. and more expresly he repeateth that direction, that if any man hunger and defire to cat his ordinary meat, Let him do it at home, ver. 24. So that no direction for the time to come can be interpreted to belong to common eating in the Church, or in the publick meetings thereof, but such as is facramental only.

To the second, to wit, if the Apostle doth dip in this question, with respect to that objection of the impurity of joynt communicants, we do propose these things for clearing of the fame.

Fitft, We fay, that whether they did actually object that or not, yet there was ground for them to object the same if it had weight, as the Text cleareth:

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Neither could the Apostle, knowing that ground, and having immediately mentioned the fame, have accelle to prefle them all indifferently to communicate together, if his direction meet not the case; for this might ftill have flood in the way, that many of them were such and such, and therefore not to be communicated with; and if it be a sufficient reason to keep them from joynt communicating, then the case being fo circumftantiated, it would also be a sufficient reafon to keep him from imposing that as a duty upon them, at least, so long as the case stood as it was.

Secondly, We fay, that it is not unlike there was such hesitations in some of them; and that (whatever was among them) it is clear, that the Apostle doth expressly speak to this case, and endeavour to remove that objection out of the way, to wit, that men hem should not scare at the Sacrament, because of the pronov- fanity of others: and that therefore they might withcope out scruple as to that, communicate joyntly, and the tarry one for another, which is his scope, ver. 33.

It is This will appear by confidering several reasons whereift in by he preffeth this scope, for that, ver. 33. Wherefore, hem my brethren, when ye come together, tarrie one for another, d to lis the scope laid down as a conclusion from the former iting grounds which he hath given. Now, when he hath their corrected their first fault, to wit, their irreverent manthat Iner of going about the Ordinance, by bringing them to cat Christs institution, ver. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. He com-So eth, in the last place, to meet with this objection, What if others be present who palpably cannot discern the Lords Body, and so cannot communicate worthily? Can it be fafe to communicate with fuch? Or, is it not better to find out some other way of communicating apart, and not together with such? The Apostle giveth several answers to this, and reasons, whereby he cleareth, that their division was not warrantable upon that ground, from ver. 28. And so concludeth. ver. 33. that notwithstanding thereof, they might tarry one for another.

The first reason, is, ver, 28. But let a man examine bimfelf,

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himfil, and to let him tar. Which theweth, 1. That a mans comfortable preparation for this duty, 1 to examine himfelf; and that the fruit may be expected or not expected, accordingly as it shall be with himself: Otherwayes, it were not a sufficient direction for preparation, to put him to examine himfelf. Again, 2, thefe are knit together, Let a man examine himself, and fo let him eat. Which is in sum, this, when a man hath in fome fincerity looked upon his own condition, and hath attained fome fultablenesse to the Ordinances, as to his own private case, then, (faith the Apostle) Let him eat, without respecting the condition of others. Otherwayes, a man having examined himself, yet could not eat, though his own disposition were as it should be ! If the case of others might hinder him in eating. And we conceive, it is a main part of the Apostles scope, by knitting these two together (to wit, a mans caring with the examining of himself) purposly to prevent fuch a debate.

The second reason which he giveth, will confirm this alfo; for, faith he, ver. 29. He who eateth and drinketh unworthily, he eateth and drinketh unto himfelf damnation, or judgement. Which is, in furn, this , man that hath examined himlelf, may eat of the Sacrament, though many persons communicate unwork thily with him, because (faith he) he that eateth unworthily, doth not bring damnation or judgement upon others, nor is his fin imputed to them that communicate with him, but he doth bring it upon himfelf. and therefore no other bath cause to scar at the Ordinance because of that, if he hath examined himself. This reason he again confirmeth from experience ver. 30. For this cause (saith he) many are sick, and many among you are weak, &c that is, not because they did communicate with those who are scandalous being in good case themselves; but for this cause, faith he, many are fick, &c. and have brought upon themselves great plagues, because by not examining of themselves, they did communicate unworthily,

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and fo, by their own fin, brought their ftroaks upon another th themicives.

He gives a third reason for making out of his scope. ver. 31. For, if we will judge our selves, we should not be judged; that is, men need not be anxious in this case, whether others judge themselves or not; for, faith he, Gods absolving or judging of us, doth not depend upon what they do, but upon what we our selves do. And therefore present them still to look to themselves, because the judging and humbling of our felves before God, is the way not to be judged by Him, even in reference to that Ordinance, whatever others do.

Now, when he hath fully cleared the reasons, and, as it were, made out this proposition, that if a man be right in his own frame, the fin of another joynt communicant, cannot be hurrful to him, or be ground to mar him in eating, and when by an interferred parenthesis, he hath obviated a doubt, ver. 32. he concludeth, ver. 33. Wherefore, faith he, my brethren (feing it is fo) tarry one for another, and be not anxiously feared to communicate joyntly; Now, feing all alongft the Apostle hath been giving such grounds as may clear a conscience in that case, and doth in these words lay down the direction of tarrying one for another, or of joynt communicating, as a conclusion drawn from the former grounds, It cannot be thought, but that purpoflyhe intended these reasons to be grounds for the quieting of consciences, to obey that direction in such acase; and that therefore it cannot be warrantable to separate upon that ground.

CHAP. XIII.

Shewing more particularly what it is that private perfons are called to in such a case.

IF it be asked then, What is that which private I persons ought to do in such a case? Answ. They and are certainly to contain themselves within their station,

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flation, vet fo, as fome things are called for at fuch a time more than at another time; As, first, There is need of much circumspectnesse in our own personal walk and watchfulnesse, in observing of opportunities wherein we may edifie others, as Htb. 3. 12. Secondly. There is need of more frequency, and of a more weighty circumiped manner in giving private admonitions and exhortations, &c. Thirdly, There would be much exercise of prayer, and even safting therewith (though in a fecret inoffentive manner) both for the restraining of offences, which dishonour God, and for zeal to Officers to perform their duty; if in this respect, rivers of tears were running down our cheeks, because of the abounding of offences, there might be much more folid peace f we are per-(waded) in keeping communion with others, than without that to separate with much, at least seeming pride and uncharitable cruelty in giving of offence to them, and thereby confirming them in their profanity. Fourthly, It is private persons duty to represent such offences, with their evidences, to Church-officers, or Church-judicatories, thereby to put them to the removing of fuch offences. Fifthly, They may freely, though humbly and reverently, expoftulate with Church-officers, when they are defective, and endeavour to convince them of that offence: The force of that precept, If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him, &c. warranteth fo much; and this the Colossians are to say to Archippus, that he be not de fective in his Ministery which he had received, &c. Col. 4. 17. This decently and convincingly done, i Sixthly, If all that prevail not, private persons uleful. may communicate it to other Church-officers; and no redresse following, it is their duty to follow it before the competent superiour Judicatories: for, Christ's direction, Tell the Church, importeth and warranteth the fame.

If it be asked, What further is to be done, if that fail ? Anfw. We know no other publick redreffe; Christ hath lest it there, and so may we also. Neither

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can it be instructed from Scripture, that Christ hath appointed separation to be the next step of a private persons duty for removing of offences, much lesse to go before these. Indeed the Scripture calleth for with-drawing from personal communion with groffe, feandalous persons, as a thing necessary; as also from communion in the corrupt defignes and courses of any, though they may have a form of godlinelle, as 2 Tim. 2. 4, 5, &c. which doth belong to and is comprehended under the first particular direction. And if these be faithfully observed by private Christians, we are hopeful that either their would be leffe ground of complaint for the defect of Church-officers, or more accesse to remove such as continue unfaithful, and more peace to the consciences of particular private Christians, and lesse offence and more edification to all, than any other way whatfo-CVCT.

That it is thus necessary for private persons to ac- why it is quiesce in the Churches determination, in manner as necessary to is faid, may appear from the unfetlednesse and con- acquiefce fution, both in private and publick, which otherwise in the would follow: For, either there must be a fifting in churches this determination of the Church, or, there must be Determinafome other period to fix at, or, there must be no fix- tion as to ing at all. Neither of the two last can be said, There-practice. fore, &c. Not the laft, to wit, that there is no fixing at all; for lo a particular person that were offended, would not know what were duty, or what to follow; and it would infer a defect in the Lord's Ordinance in reference to His Peoples direction and peace in such cases, which is most absurd.

If the second be said, viz. That there is some other thing to fix on for quieting of consciences in such a case, as to their exoneration beyond that publick decition; We defire to know what that is which is called-for, and by what rule we are to proceed in it? If it be faid, that in such a case the duty is to separate from that Church, where the plurality of Officers do admit fuch as are accounted to be scandalous;

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Then we ask, I. What is next to be done? it must either be to continue as no member of a Church. which is both impossible and absurd. It is impossible that there can be any particular visible baptized member, and not belong to the visible body, at least, being confidered, as the Church maketh one integral visible body. It's absurd, because it would say, That either Christ had no visible Church, or, that He hath an ordinary way of edifying by external Ordinances without His visible Church, or, that a person might be regardlesse of, and without His Church and Ordinances, and be approven of Him, and expect the benefit; yea, upon this supposition, the unfaithfulnesse of Church-officers in not casting-out of scandalous men, would infer the actual unchurching of those that were not scandalous, and so the fin of the one should be the punishment of the other, which is absurd.

If it be faid that another Church of more pure members is to be gathered, in which persons in such cases are to joyn for obtaining of pure Ordinances; Then we ask further, What if such a Congregation cannot be had? Then, what is duty in that case? Is there a necessity of living without a visible Church-state. wanting all Church-ordinances to our felves, and Baptilm to our children? What can be the fruit of that? Is it not a more uncontrovertible hazard to put our lelves without all communion of Churchordinances, than to enjoy them where they are pure. though some joynt partakers be offensive? Is not the other the way to make our children heathens, and for ever to be without Baptilm, leing warrantably they cannot be entered where we cannot abide? Doth not this also make way to make all the Ordinances contemptible, and to be undervalued by the profane. feing fuch persons do so contentedly live without them?

Further, we ask, What if other persons and we cannot agree upon joynt members; for, if it be left to mens particular discerning, that rule is uncertain and various, being involved in many difficulties, as was

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formerly hinted: in that case, either there must be no separated Church, or diverse separated Churches, according to the latitude of diverse persons charity. This being certain, that one will think a person scandalods, which another doth not esteem so; and one will approve that, which another will condemn.

Again, we ask, What if such persons that withdraw and seek to enter a more holy society, should be refused? Then, how could they evidence their own holl-nesse, and convince these resusers that they were graciously qualified, and so to be admitted if that were stuck upon, for whatever profession were made, it behoved still to be tried by no other rule, but by solks

particular discerning and charity?

Again, suppose this difficulty to be overcome, and fuch a congregation to be fettled, is it not possible that even some of those members should become scandalous? Then, supposing that by the plurality of that Church, such persons were not accounted scandalous, or not cast out, what were to be done? According to the former grounds, these who suppose themselves only pure, could not continue in communion, but behoved again to separate; and if so, then upon the renewing of the former supposition, there behoved still to be a separation in infinitum. For, there can no Church be expected on earth, in which these cases are not supposable and possible. And so now we may refume the conclusion, Either a paivate person must acquiesce, as being exonered when he hath followed the action before the Church, or he shall have no ground of peace any where, till he be out of the world, or out of all visible Churches. And so also there can be no other way of keeping publick order and ordinances, and of eviting feandal and confufion.

This truth is fully made out by those three worthy and plous Divines of New England, Cotton, Hooker, and Norton: The last whereof, by many reasons evinceth this in his answer to Appolonious his last question, pag. 162, 163, and doth from the Church of

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Crief in particular confirm this: "There (faith he) was impurity or corruption in worthip, for women taught in the Church; There was corrupt Doctrine, many denied the Refurrection: in manmers, the was most corrupt, there being so many fornications, sects, palpable love of the world, &c. Yet (faith he) the Apostle did not command those that were worthily prepared to abstain from the Supper, but, restifying abuses, he did command eyerry one to try himself, and so to eat, &c. And many other things hath he excellently to this purpose, and laieth this for a ground, that "per alies indignt accedentes non polluitar communio, bicet minuitur consultatio, that is, the communion in worship is not polluted, though the consolation be diminished by

" fuch joyne worthippers.

The second, to wit, Mr. Hooker doth confirm this Maxime fully, part 1. chap. 9. pag. 119, 120. and doth call it irrational, that the fewer should be judges of the deed of the plurality : and elswhere, that to admit separation in such a case, were to lay a ground for separation in infinitum. Only, we may add these two observations thereon. I. May not this be allowed to the Presbyterial Church where, the plurality of Churchofficers think fit not to cast out ? 2. That the Prefbyterial government is upon this confideration, unjustly loaded with an absurdity, as if necessarily upon their grounds, the minor and better party being overswayed (suppose a particular Congregation were wronged by the plurality of a Presbyterie) could have no redrefle; for, according to his grounds the same would follow upon the congregational way; for, suppose the plurality of the Congregation should wrong some officer, contrary to the vote of the minor and better party, there can be no other redreffe there, than for men to keep themselves free: For, it still recurreth, if the minor part should claim to have their Sentence weighty, because it is upon the matter right, which the other is not, he hath already determined in the place cited, that that is, contrary at

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to all orderly proceeding and rules of reason and layeth open the gap to endlesse differention, and the disannulling of all publick proceeding; for, men in such cases, being their own judges, are ever ready to think

themselves in the right.

By the first, to wit, Mr. Cotton, it is laid down as an unquestionable agreed ground, with this note upon the back of it, By basly withdrawing, Resormation is not procured but retarded. Thus he, pag. 2. of the holinesse of Church-members. And hath not experience confirmed this? Might not Discipline have been more vigorous in many Congregations, if this had not been? And what can be expected of Resormation in the body of the Christian world, if to the offence of the rest, those who suppose themselves to be more tender, should instantly withdraw from them.

CHAP. XIV.

Clearing whether the Ordinances of Christ be any way polluted by corrupt fellow-worshippers.

T) Ut yet two things are to be fatisfied. 1. It may D be faid, But are not the Ordinances of Christ fomeway polluted by the unworthinesse of such scandalous partakers? and if so, can polluted Ordinances be partaken of without fin? Anfin. We may confider polluting of Ordinances in a threefold fente. 1. An Ordinance may be faid to be polluted when the effentials and substantials thereof are corrupted. fo as indeed it ceafeth to be an Ordinance of Jeffis Christ: Thus the Masse in Popery, is a fearful abomination, and a corruption of the Sacrament: in this respect, the Ordinance (if it may be called an Ordinance after that, for indeed it is not an Ordinance of Christ) is polluted, and this may be many wayes fallen into, and communion in this, is indeed finful and cannot but be fo.

2. An Ordinance may be faid to be polluted, when

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it is irreverently and profancly abused, though effentials be keeped: Thus the Lords Sabbath may be polluted, which yet is holy in it felf; So was the Table of the Lord polluted, Mal. 1. And in this fense the Sacrament of the Lords Supper was indeed polling ted by the Corintbians, I Cor. II. when some came drunk or otherwayes irreverently to the holy Ordinances; in this respect, an Ordinance may be said to be polluted to him that so goeth about it, because to the unclean all things are unclean; but it is not polluted in it felf, nor to any other that examine themfelves, as the former inftance doth clear, because that pollution cometh from nothing in the Ordinance, (it being in its effentials compleat) but doth arise from the finfuluesse of such and such persons, and therefore must be commensurable with them.

2. An Ordinance may be faid to be polluted, upon this extrinsick consideration, to wit, when by fome circumstance in it, or miscarriage of those that are about it, it is made common-like, and fo wanteth that lufter and honourableneffe that it ought to have; by such a fault the Ordinance is made obnoxious to contempt, and is despised by others, contrary to the Lords allowance. Thus the Priests of old made the offering of the Lord vile and contemptible, which was not by corrupting them in effentials, nor making them cease to be Ordinances; but by their miscarriages and corrupt irreverent way of going about them, they did lay that flumbling-block before others, to make them account these Ordinances contemptible. This may be diverse wayes fallen into, As, 1. when the Officer, or Minister, hath a profane carnal carriage, So he maketh the Ordinance of the Ministery, and every other Ordinance vile in this sense: Thus, if an Elder or any others should take on them to admonish while they are in drunkennesse or passion, or such like, they do pol-Inte that admonition, yet still these Ordinances are Ordinances, and that admonition an admonition. 2. It is fallen into, when an Officer doth indifcreetly

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and indifferently administrate Ordinances to precious and vile, as if they were common things. Thus a reproof may be polluted when a manifest known contemner is reproved, because, so a pearl is casten before fwine, which is derogatory to the excellency thereof. Thus a Minister may profane or pollute the most excellent promises or confolations of the Word, when he doth without difcretion apply the same indifferently or, without making difference between the tender and the untender and profane; yea, even between the hypocrites and the truely godly. This is not to divide the Word of God aright. and is indeed that which the Lord mainly accounteth to be Not separating of the precious from the vile, when peace is spoken to them to whom he never spoke it. This is also committed, when grofly scandalous persons are permitted, without the exercise of Discipline upon them to live in the Church, or are admirted to Sacraments, because so Gods institution is wronged, and the lufter thereof is leffened, and men are induced to think leffe thereof. 3. This may be also by the irreverent manner of going about them, when it is without that due reverence and gravity that ought to be in His worthip. Thus one may make the Word and Sacrament to be in a great part ridiculous; and fo suppose, that at the Sacrament of the Supper, in the same Congregation, some should be communicating at one place, forme at another, forme should be palpably talking of other things, some miscarrying by drunkennesse, &c. as its clear was in the Church of corinth. All those may be said to pollute the Ordinances, as they derogate from their weight and authority; and miscarry in the administration of them, and are ready to breed irreverence and contempt in others where the Lords Body in the Supper, or the end of His institution in other Ordinances, is not differred and observed; yet all these do not pollute the Ordinance in it felf, or make it to be no Ordinance, nor do pollute it to any that doth reverently partake of the same, and doth not stumble

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upon the block that is laid before him : Because an hearer that were fultably qualified, might comfortably receive and feed upon a fiweet promife, even when it might be extended in its application beyond the Lord's allowance; yet doth not that alter the nature thereof to him: So may worthy Communicants that have examined themselves, and do discern the Lord's Body, partake of that Sacrament with His approbation, and to their own comfort; Because they might discern Him and by that come to get the right impression of the Ordinances, although many blocks were lying in their way: for, it is not others cafting of fnares before them, but their flumbling at them. that doth pollute the Ordinance to them. Hence we fee, that though all these were in the Church of Corinth, fo that there was neither reverence in the manper, nor discretion in respect of the Receivers (for, fome came drunken, and fome came and waited not on others, some came hungry, and others ful) yet was it still the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and unpolluted to those, who by examining of themselves, and discerning of His Body (which others failed in) did reverently and duly partake of the same.

Besides these wayes of pollution mentioned, we cannot conceive of any other some legal and ceremonial pollution, such as was by touching a dead body, &c. and was opposit to ceremonial holinesse, is not in this case to be mentioned) yet we see the first cannot be alleaged here, and none of the other two ought to scare tender persons from the Ordinances of

Tefus Chrift.

If it be faid, That communicating in such a case, doth seem to approve such an admission, and to confirm those in some good opinion of themselves who are admitted, and so there is a necessity of abstaining, though not upon the account, that the Ordinances are polluted, yet, for preventing the foresaid offence, which might make us guilty. Answ. If weight be laid upon offence, we make no question but it will sway to the other side. O what offence hath this way

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given to the Church of Christ! how hath it hardness those that had prejudice at Religion? How hath is opened the mouths of fuch as lie in wait for fomething of this kind? How hath it grieved and weighted others? how hath it made the work of Reformation , profession of Holinesse, exercise of Discipline. &c. to flink to many, and so to be loaded with reproaches, as hath marred much that accesse to keep the Ordinances unpolluted in the former respect, which otherwife might have been? 2. Is not reverent and exemplary partaking of the Ordinances at fuch a time, a more edifying and convincing testimony against fuch untendernesse, than by withdrawing to give a new offence? 2. The Lord's precept in such a case, Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat, doth nor leave the thing indifferent upon that ground; And therefore that objection is not here to have place, as the grounds formerly laid down do evince: For we are not to be wife or holy beyond what the Lord hath commanded.

CHAP.

Shewing if any thing further in any imaginable case be allowed to private Christians.

a. IT may be yet further moved, Can there be no more allowed in any supposable case? Answ. It is most unsuitable, in a matter of practice, when solks are not contending for curiosity, but for direction, to suppose cases hardly or rarely possible in a constitute Church, which is worthy of that name, or, upon that ground, to sound a contest in dispute, or schilm in practice, in cases palpably different; At least, union should be kept till such a case come about. And is it likely, where the order formerly laid down is observed, that there can be habitual admission of notoriously or grievously scandalous persons, though, it may be, there be lesser failings of several sorts: Yet, supposing that any, out of infirmity or affection, not having

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having such knowledge, or otherwise, should flick to joyn in the Ordinances at some times, or in some places, upon such an account; who yet do not love separation, or the creeking of a different Church, We

fay further,

1. That, in such a case, such persons may remove from one Congregation to another, where such grofnesse cannot be pretended to be; and the persons being otherwise without scandal, can neither be pressed to continue (they being so burdened) nor yet resuled to be admitted where orderly they shall defire to joyn, seing this could not be denied to any. And, we suppose, sew will be so uncharitable, as to think there is no Congregation whereunto they can joyn, or yet so addicted to outward respects, as to choose separation with offence to others, disturbance to the Church, and, it may be, with little quietnesse to themselves, whenas they have a remedy so in offensive allowed unto them.

2. Although separation be never allowable, and fecession be not alway at an instant practicable; yet we suppose, in some cases, simple abdinence, if it be not offensive in the manner and circumstances, if it be not made customary, and if the ground be so convincing, and the case so grosse that it will affect any ingenuous hearer, and so evident that there is no accelle to any acquainted in such places, to deny the fame, or that there be a present undecided processe concerning such things before a competent Judge; in some such cases, I say, as might be supposed, we conceive abilinence were not rigidly to be misconstructed, it being for the time the burden of fuch perfons, that they cannot joyn; and, it may be, having fome publick complaint of fuch a thing to make-out, and in dependence elsewhere: Although we will not ftrengthen any to follow this way, nor can it be pretended to, where the case is not singulary horrid; yet supposing it to be such we conceive it is the lafest one way for the persons peace, and the preventing of offence together; yet, much christian prudence is to be exercised

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one foro be removing for a time, or other wayes, that there appear to be no publick contempt; but we conceive this case is so rarely incident, and possible that there needeth be little said of it, much lesse should there be any needlesse debate or rent entertained upon the consideration or notion thereof. And certainly, the case before us of the admitting of the Nicolaitans and Jezebel, considering their doctrine and deeds, is more horrid than readily can be supposed; and yet it would seem, that though this detect should still have continued, the Lord doth require no other thing of private professors, but their continuing-in, or holding fast of, their former personal purity, which is all the burden that He doth lay upon them.

To flut up all, we may fee what evils are to be evited in the profecution of publick Scandals, and what a commendable thing it were to have this in the right manner vigorous; if private Christians were zealous, loving and prudent in their private admonitions; if Officers were diligent, fingle, grave, and weighty in what concerneth them; if offending perfons were humble and fubmiffive, and all reverent and respective of the Ordinances, and studious of private and publick edification, How beautiful and profitable a thing would it be? Certainly this manner of procedure, would be more beautifying to the Ordinances of Christ, more convincing to all on-lookers, more sweet and easie both to Officers and People, and more edifying and gaining to all, and, by God's bleffing, were the way to make the mistaken yoke of Discipline to be accounted easie and light. And if all these ends be defirable, and the contrary evils be to be eschewed; then unquestionably the right manner of mannaging this great Ordinance of Discipline, is carefully to be studied and followed both by Officers and people.

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PART III.

Concerning Dodrinal Scandals, or Scandalous Errours.

CHAP. I.

Molding out the expediency of handling this matter:

Lthough somewhat hath been spoken in reference to practical Scandals, (to call them so) Yet there hath been little of nothing at all spoken of doctrinal Scandals, and what may be called for in reference to them.

It is true, that these cases are so various and difficult, that there can hardly be any thing particularly spoken to them; also what hath been said, may, for the most part, proportionably be applied to them; ye considering that this place doth look so directly to such Scandals as are in Dostrine; and that the case of these times doth call for some consideration of such, lest what hath been sometry said, be altogether defective as to this, it will not be impercinent to insist a little on it also, although already this Tractate bath drawn to a greater length than was at first intended.

We may in profecution of this, 1. confider fone general Doctrine. 2. Some general Queffions, 3. More particularly speak to the several duties according to particular cases and remedies that are called for. 4. Shew the necessity of orderly Judicial procedon here, in reference to such Scandals, as well as in reserved to Scandals in practice formerly mentioned.

For Doctrines, we find here. I. That Errour, vented by these that are corrupted therewith, is no lesse scanned so, and no lesse to be accounted so, that

grolle practice; for it is a reacy to be an occasion of flumbling, and to mair the sphirtual edification and well-being of the people of God, as any feandalous practices: Which is confirmed, I. By the confequents of Errour, it destroyes the soul, 2 Pet. 2. I. 2 Thess. 2. 12. yea, it bringeth on swift dammation, 2 Pet. 2. I. overthrows the faith of many. 2 Tim. 2. 18. perverts the Scripture to mens destruction, 2 Pet. 3. 16. deceives many, Matth. 24. Therefore for this cause, it is called also, 2 Pet. 2. damnable, pernicious, and such like: which sheweth, that really it becomes a stumbling block where it is.

2. This will appear if we confider the titles that the holy Ghoft usually giveth to such in Scripture, as are promotters of corrupt Doctrine: there are not titles bearing greater indignation and abomination, given to any, than to such, as they are called dogs, evil workers, Phil. 3. 2. wolves, yea, grievous wolves, Mat. 7. 15. Act. 20. deceitful workers, ministers of Satan, as if expressly they were commissionated by him, 2 Cor. 11. 12. deceivers, liars. Rev. 2. ill men and sourcers.

that wax worfe and worfe, 2 Tim. 3. 13.

3. Confider the many threatnings and woes that are in Scripture against them, March, 22, the many warnings that are given to Ministers to watch against them, Mis 20, the plain directions that are to cenfure them, Dr. 3, 10, the particular examples of cenfuring them recorded in Scripture, (as after will appear) Christs commending it where it is, His reproving of it where it is not, as in these second and third Chapters of the Revelation is manifest; these and such like, do evidently make out how exceedingly scandalous the venting of corrupt Dostrine is, which Rev. 2, 6, the Lord saith, He hates, and therefore it cannot but be lorthsome and abominable.

4. Confider the many warnings that people have to either fuch, and that upon this account as being offentive, as Rom. 16. 17. All. 20. Phil. 3.1, 2. 2 Job. 10. which evidently showeth the scandalousnesse there-

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4. Confider the Dature of Brion more partieus larly as less contrary so the truth of God, and therefore is a lie, as foundalous practices are contrary to the holineffe of God; now Gods truth and veracity is no leffe an effential attribute than His holiness. 2. This is not only to lie, but it is to attribute that unto the most High, by fathering these lies upon Him; and faying, thus faith the Lord, when He hath faid no fuch thing but the contrary. 3. It teacheth others to lie, as it is, Matth. 5. 19. and that more forcibly and impudently than any practice can do. 4. It hath its original from the devil, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father thereof, Joh. 8. 44. And spreaders of corrupt Doctrine, have special influence on the upholding and spreading of his kingdom. 4. It is a fruit of the flesh, even as murther, adultery, witchcraft; and feing it is fo ranked by the Apostle, Gal.

5. 19, 20. can it be but scandalous?

6. The effects of it will evidence this. 1. It spoileth the vines, Cant. 2. 15. for, there is a wronging of purity where it is. 2. It spoileth Government and order, it hath confusion with it. 2. It spoileth unity, and it hath ever contention with it, and (as it is, Gal. 5. 15.) a biting and devouring one of another; and contention cannot be eschewed but by harmony in evil, which is far more desperate. 4. Which followeth on all, it deftroyeth fouls; and infecteth more speedily, dangerously and spreadingly than other practical Scandals; never hath the Church been fo defaced, nor so many souls destroyed by any scandalous practice, as by the venting of corrupt Doctrine; and however we take scandal, as in the general was laid down, as that which is apr to flumble others, and occasion their fall, or to weaken the confidence and jumble the peace, and disquiet the minds of some. or as it grieves, the hearts of others, or, as it maketh the wayes of God to be ill spoken of, it will be still found, that such kind of errours, are still to be accounted scandalous; and that nothing opens mouths more against Religion than that, See 2 Pet. 2. 2. By

all which it appeareth, that grolle errour is not only a fin, but a fcandalous fin, and that of most groffe nature.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the spreading of Errour; Gods displeasure at the fuffering thereof, and the fainting even of good men in restraining the same.

DEfide this, there are three things confiderable, D which from this and other Epiftles we have occasion to observe and enquire a little into, before we

propound any particular question.

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The first, is, concerning the spreading and increase of Errour, and that of the most unreasonable and abfurd Errours, even in the Primitive times. The fecond is, anent the Lords deteffing of it, fo that the very suffering of the spreaders of it, is hateful to Him in His Angels and Churches, that otherwise are approvable for their own particular carriages, as in Pergamos; and their not induring thereof is commendable, even when their own inward condition is not alrogether approvable, as may be feen in Ephifits. The third, is, how that fomerimes there may be fainting, as to zealous restraining of Errour, even in men that are nor the worft.

For the first, Can it but be thought strange that de- what lufion should come to this height so soon: and it may height make all to tremble at the imperuousness thereof, r. It delusions of Is a most foul absurd errour, this of the Nicolaitans, this kind even against natures light. 2. It spreadeth and encreas- may come eth in several persons and Churches: and Church- unto. flory doth show that it abounded; and no lesse is infinuared in these Epiffles. 3. That it spreadeth not only among heathens, but in the Church, and among Christs Servants, who are seduced therewith; which sheweth, that even some of note were carried away with it. 4. This is in the Churches most pure times, some of the Apostles (at least John) being yet

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slive when this was vented. 5. It is carried on by despicable instruments in comparison of others, a woman calling her felf a prophetelle, some fellows calling themselves Apostles and new lights, that men would think, should rather have been counted distracted, than to have been so reverenced. 6. This is done against the testimony of their own faithful Minifters, and in such Churches where God had wirnesfes keeping themselves from that evil, yea, where many Professors were in that respect pure, yet others are following that errour, receiving and reverencing these seducers more than any faithful Pastors. 7. This is done where there peither wanted light nor authority to convince them; for, no question, both were, as may be gathered from the trial of thefe in Ephefas; yes, John writeth from the Lords own mouth to confute them; and though there could be no exception against the application of his Doctrine, yet it was adhered to for many years after that. 8. John or some other Apostle was the instrument to convert them from Paganism to Christianity, yet, now can he not recover them from a foul errour in Christianity when they are bewitched therewith: and though no question his authority and arguments had lesse weight with them now than before they were Christians; yet what can be thought of more force for their conviction and reclaiming, than thele confiderations? The like was often Paul's case, who at first had an eafie work with people, when they were heathens, in comparison of what he had with the same when they became Christians, and tainted with false doctrine, or listeners to corrupt teachers, as in the Epifles to the Corinthians and Galatians is clear. Which doth thew, 1. The unreasonablenesse and power of a deluding Spirit, that nothing can convince, when once people come to like that way they go on, deceiving and being deceived, and, as Peter faith, 2 Pet. 3. 16. pervert the Scripture to their own de-fruction; And as may be gathered, they do so by corrupting, first, that which doth appear to be more oblure,

obfare, and then they mould other Scriptutes for may conflit with their fancies, that they have con ceived to have ground in the former, and forthey, first, form notions out of oblique places, and thereafter conform the more plain Scriptures to thele, whereas the just contrary is most fafe; and when the ignorant and unitable shall account themselves the only learned in the mysteries of God, what wonder is it that they be thus given up? and when they think the plain truths, and duties wherein there is no shaddow of a ground of flumbling, are below them? and thus they may attain to much dexterity to wrest the Scriptures, even the plaineft (as is implied there) as may be judicially subservient to their own destruction, and to prevent their being convinced, which might put them to shame; and occasion their abandoning of that. 2. We may fee, that it is no easie thing to recover a milled people into errour; that peraduenture, 2 Tim. 2. 25. Is not accidently put in , but to flow that it is a hundred to one if fuch get repentance, whereby the Lord would fear all from that evil, and the more groffe their error is often men are the more unreasonable in the defence thereof, and obstinate in adhering thereunto, because there is most of a judicial ftroak feen there, in giving up men to fuch foolries, it is not credible that otherwise they could fall in them, and fo being finiteen of God, is it possible that any reason can prevail with them, while that plague lieth on? Was there any errour like to that of worshipping stocks and stones? it being even against lense and reason, that men should burn a part thereof, and make fome common work of another portion, and of a third make a deity and fall down and worship it, as the Prophet doth expostu-1/4. 44. 19. which upon confideration might be found to be abfurd: this is premitted as the reason of such blockishnesse, ver. 18. For he hath shut their eyes that they cannot fee, and their hearts that they cannot understand. 2. The unreasonablensse of this Spirit in men, would not be thought firange in any of the for-

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mer respects even although no person could stop their mouth, but they should seem to themselves to triumph in the bringing in of unheard-of seuses of Scripture; the more they abound in that, it is the more judicial to them, even as the moe they carry after them, and the more they be forborn by others, it workern the more to their destruction: men would keep a distance from these infections, none can tell what they may turn unto if once entred in a giddy unitable foul, carried with the spair of a spirit of errour, and being given up of God thereto for itching after it, and not receiving the love of the truth, may come to the most horrible things, and that without shame or remorie, ere there be any end; and on-lookers would acknow-

ledge God's justice in such stroaks, and learn to rever-

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ence and fe ir him the more.

errour is a most difpleasing thing to Chrift.

The second cannot but be clear from this: for, if ing of groß errour be such an evil that thwarteth, 1. both with errour is a Gods holinesse and truth; And, 2. that hazardeth so many fouls, (for , never a plague bath to destroyed the face of the vifible Church, nor carried fo many fouls to hell as errour hath done) Then the fuffering of it cannot but be hateful to Him who loveth His Church. 3. There is no way by which the devil reproacheth Ordinances and the Word more than this, by turning them to the quite contrary end, as if he would out hoor the Lord in His own bow, (which is abominable to mention) and invert His own means, and turn His own weapons on Him; and luffering of this, is a countying at his delign. a. There is no way by which the devil may fo win in on Christ's Servants to seduce them as by this, as in the Epiftle to Thyatira is clear. And can there danger come to nigh to Chrift, and He not be displeased with what firengtheneth their mares? 3. This doth equal yea, in tome respect, preser the devil to Him so far as in us lieth, and so cannot but provoke His jealoufie; for, so the devil hath liberty to vent his lies with Truth equally; and there being many lies, though there be but one Truth, he hath by this moe doors opeaed

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opened to him than the Golpel hath. 6. This dorn make even the Truth, Ordinances, and Religion it felf to be thought light of; when all these have toleration, it is, on the matter, a proclaiming an indifferency to be in thele things, than which nothing can more reflect on the jealous God, who in His Word putteth such a difference, and showeth such detestation at indifferency. 7. This bringeth hudge confufions on the Church. For, 1. If these errours and corrupt teachers prevail, they carry fouls after them. and deftroy them; and ought that to be thought light of? 2. If they prevail not, yet they croffe, afflict and offend them, and to prove a mare and burden to them of whom the Lord is tender. 8. Toleration doth either account little of errour, as being no hurtful thing, and fo there can be no effect of truth; or, it doth account little of the destruction of souls: both which must be abominable. 9. Errous doth not only break God's Law, but doth teach others to do fo; and fuffering thereof, must be a maintaining of Teachers to teach Transgression and Rebellion against the Lord.

The third thing observable, is, That though zeal in Sometimes a Minister, especially against errour, be exceedingly commendable; yet oftimes is there fainting, even want not among Ministers who are not of the worst: and the affection, Angel is here reproved for sparing of these Nicolaitans, at least in being faint and defective in pursuing them in a ministerial way, as Antipas is commended for his faithfulnelle, and the Angel of Ephe-Just for his not fainting in profecuting of this trial; the Lord hath put these two together, the faithful and wife Steward; and when they are carried equally on, O how commendable are they! yet in the recko-ning, the one is but mentioned, Well done those good and jaithful servant, not to give a dispensation in reference to the other, but to flew the necessity and excellency of this, that thereby Ministers may be put to it, left, under pretext of prudence, they increach upon that freedom and faithfulnelle which is called-for from

those who are yet too condescending to erroneous Teachers : and why

them,

in undertaking, or in profecuting of his charge, in which there will not want many difficulties, that will be ready to occasion fainting, if they be not boldly in the Lord's firength fet against. as we may inflance in these respects, r. In respect of the time: there are some evil times, wherein it is hard to know what to fay, for which the prudent may be faid to keep filence, and often that pretext may be the occasion of fostering too much fainting, when the Lord calleth-for faithfulneffe. 2. It may arise from a man's fensiblenesse of his own infirmities and unequalnesse for that charge, as seems to be in Teremiah. Fir. 1. when a mans own felf, or thoughts of himfelf. without respect to his call, is made the rule whereby he proceedeth. 3. It may arise from the message which he is called to carry: Tharp meffages are heavy and burdensom, that maketh Jonas to shift for a time to undertake that denunciation against Niniveh especially confidering that these Messengers ordinarily are not acceptable to hearers; and that there are withal usually not a few who sew pillows under arm-holes; and are ready to deftroy, in that respect, what others build. 4. It may arise from hearers, and that of diverse tempers; some are ready, like swine, to turn back on the Carriers, as if they did hate them, as Micajab was met with by Ahab, 2 King. 22. who yet had four hundred flattering hars in request. Some again, are of an itching humour, and do not abide convincing doctrine and faithfulnesse, such are ready to breed a separation from them that do faithfully reprove, at least much to cool their affections to them, which (as it is, a Tim. 4.) is no little piece of trial to a minister, : Many also that are affectionate, are yer hafty, and cannot abide plain dealing; and it is no leffe difficulty to win to be faithful to thefe, than to others who are openly prophane. 5. There is a fainting that arifeth from diffrust of God, as not being confident of the performance of His promile, and of their being countenanced in His work; and fo feeing it impossible in themselves and in their own cycs,

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eyes, they give It over as if it were to timply, 6. Then is a fainting that arifeth from supposed events, either as thinking there will be no fruit of fuch a thin that fome inconvenience will follow it: It is like that Mafes was not free of the first, when he faith, Iffail deth not, or, wil not bear me, And what will Pharaob det And the laft is common, when once flesh and bloud are admitted to confult of duty from the supposed inconveniencies that will follow, then readily it decideth, that it is not duty at all. It may be somewhat of that was here, that the Angel feared the disquieting of the Church, or some schism that might follow on it; and the Lord's threatning to take another way of fighting against them with the sword of His mouth, doth infinuate this : for, a carnal thift, to prevent fome Inconveniences, often draweth-on that which men feared, the more speedily. Other grounds of it also may be given, which yet are not approvable before God.

CHAP.

If any of the People of God may be carried away with groffe delufions.

L'Rom these Doctrines several Questions may be I moved. And, 1. If any of the People of God may be carried away with such abominable ertours in doctrine? We shall answer in these Aftertions.

Affert. 1. There is no errour fo groffe materially, It is not bur Believers may fall into it: For, although they fimply have a promise that errour shall not separate wholly possible bat betwixt Christ and them, nor that finally they shall lome may be carried away therewith; yet, feing they have cor- in a great ruption that is capable to be tempted to all fin, and measure, for to to this among other fins, they cannot be exempted a time, be from this, neither is there any promise by which they carried acan expect ablolutely to be kept from herefie, more way. than murder or adultery, which are fruits of the flesh with

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with this: yea, except the fin against the holy Ghost and final impenitencie, there is no absolute exemption to the Believer from any fin, which the Lord hath wifely ordered fo, to keep the Believer from fecurity, even in reference to fuch tentations: Befide, in experience it is found that grace exempteth not from error in judgment; for, it is like, that Solomon, if he did not actually commit idelarry himself, yet became too inclinable that way, as we may gather from what is in Scripcure recorded concerning him; Neither can we altogether, as to their state, condemn these in Corinth, in Galdtia, and in other Churches, who were drawn from the Truth after their conversion, as if none but unregenerate professors had been so. Yea,it is possible, if not probable, that some of these, whom the Lord calleth His Servants, and yet were feduced in the Church of Thyatira, were not fill in the state of name.

net not so easily as unto grosse practical evils.

Affert. 2. Although we dare not altogether fay it's impossible, yet we think that it is more rare for a Believer to fall in groffe errours, and for any confiderable time to continue therein, fo as to be accounted an Heretick, than in other icandalous - practices. For, 1. The Scripture doth more rarely mention this, than other fins of Believers, which are more frequently recorded. 2. There are very special promises for preferving of the Elect from being feduced by falle christs and falle reachers: and though it do not hold univerfally in all particulars, except in as far as reaches their everlasting state; yet it may be extended in some good measure, even to seduction it self; and we suppose may be more clear from these confiderations, 1. Becoming erroneous in such a manner, dorh not proceed from some sudden surprising-fit of tentations, as grosse practices oftentimes may do; but it implieth a deliberateneffe therein, which is not so readily incident to a Believer, and it cannot fo well be called a fin of infirmity; and therefore the Scripture doth ever let out such teachers of falle doctrine as most abomimable, to wit as not ferving the Lord Christ, but their own bellies, Part 3.

Pellies, Rom. 16. 18. as being memies to the croffe of thrift,
Phil. 2. 19. as being ministers of Satan, a Cor. 11. 15.

Other men (as it were) that are unrenewed are common subjects and, servants to the devil; but corrupt teachers they are apostles to him, and prime officers in his kingdom: These cities, and such like, cannot well be applicable to Saints in respect of their infirmities; and therefore, we think, that (at least) it is more rarely incident to them, to be carriers on and promoters

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of corrupt doctrine. 2. It appeareth from this, that an Hererick is faid to be felf-condemned, Tit. 3. It because ere one can be so denominated, there must be a rejecting of admonitions, which stands not so very well with the nature of a Saint. 3. This conside-

well with the nature of a Saint. 3. This confideration will also make it evident, that the Scripture speaketh of repentance of, and recovery from corrupt doctrine, as a very rare and uncertain thing, Gal.

4. 10. the Aposile sears he did bestow labour in vain

in this businesse; and 2 Tim. 2.25, the Apostle doth
put a peradventure upon this, if peradventure God will
give them (to wit, those that oppose themselves) repen-

funct unto the acknowledging of the Truth. There is not fuch a peradventure put to any kind of fin: which sheweth that it must be more difficult to be recovered from it, than from other fins; and that therefore Be-

lievers, ordinarily at least, must be in a special manner preserved, from it. 4. Which doth confirm the former, This delution is a main spiritual plague; and is often the punishment nor of former fins of

infirmity, but of not receiving the love of the Truth, and of hypocrific and proud prefumption; and although the Lord is not to be limited and bound up from chaftening. His own with this rod, yet we may fay from experience in the Word, and from the na-

ture of the plague, and other grounds. It is neither the ordinary spot nor rod of His Children; and if at any time it be, it doth speak out readily much spiri-

tual pride, felf-feeking, lightnesse, security, wantonnesse of spirit, ignorance and conceitednesse joyned with it, want of exercise, or some one thing or other of

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that kind. And, as we hinted, when they are overraken, we will not readily find in Scripture that fuch are heads to promote and carry on the defign of error.

believers evils undlfingularly chafteneth them for the fame.

when any Affert. g. When a Believer falleth in fuch an evil, the Lord usually chafteneth him, either with more groffe fal in such our-breakings, or with some there way of restoring, or with removal under a cloud, without much feen by the Lord evidence of recovery, as we fee in the case of Solomon, who became fome way guilty of this ill, of whose recovery the Scripture is very filent, even though his fin be fully recorded, and the remainders of his idolatry are marked to be flanding in the dayes of Hezekiah; and indeed there is but little on record in Scripture of the recovery of those that have been carried so away, though we may judge charitably of some of them in the general: The Lord wifely ordereth this, partly, as a challening to them, partly, as a warning to others, and to make all men, especially Believers, to fear, and to take heed left they fall; because, recovery is not so eafie, and even they that are spiritual may be tempted, Galat. 6. 1.

rejually cor-Affert.4. These that are spreaders of errour, do most rupt teach- frequency fet upon these who have some protestion ers fet more of Religion, more than upon others who walk not under that name. For, the spreading of groffe errour, although it do not carry away many really godly, nor finally any at all, yet doth it often prove the most then than fearthing trial to them, and doth prove exceedingly others that firong and successful against many unhumbled Pro-

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There are two things comprehended here, 1. That may also be among Profesiours, and doth prove a stumbling to them, more than any other groffe practices; they may fland out against their and yet be prevailed over by

2. It comprehendeth this alfo, that this tentation of errour doth eather attempt the gaining of these that are eminent for profession, than others who have no fuch game, although such fomenmes may be car-

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red alfo away therewith. We see that these Michael and falle Apoftles, and the prophendle free il, are not teaching nor feducing heathers, but the rants, Rev. 2. 20. which may take in even fuch as eminently gave out themselves to be Christs Servants yea, it is clear, that neither did this errour have fuch inceeffe amongst heathens, as amongst Christians, nor did the teachers thereof to intend the leavening of them, as they did vehemently endeavour the corrupt ing of the Church ; we fee it also in other Churches, Was there any Church more shining with gifts, than that of Corinth? and yet there did falle Apoliter breed great diffractions and opposition to the Apostle Paul, and that as taking occasion from the giftedness and eminencie of that Church beyond others, to drive on that defign. Again, was there any Church that did more tenderly receive the Golpel, than these of Galatia? as we may fee from chap. 4. 14, 15. They received him as an Angel of God, and as Chrift Icfüs, they would have plucked out their own eyes for him; and yet there is no Church fo foon fhaken and infected by corrupt teachers; and fo bewitched with them and their tentations, as we may gather from chap. 1.6. chap. 2. 1, 2. and throughout the Epifile. It is like the devil wook occasion of their warmnesse inflantly to fet upon them before their fetling, more than on other places or Churches, where such hopeful beginnings did not appear; And thus we fee in experience daily, that where prolanity abounderh, there are fewer onfets to tempt to errour, and leffe successe, than where the Gospel hath had more welcome and fruit; as it were, the devil bendeth this rentation against the last, with more vehemencie and lubtiley, than he doth against the former : for which we may give these Reasons. 1. His harred is most at them, and he would faineft have them overturned. 2. Because he hath other balts that are more suitable to profane men: and fo long as they are his, he doth not to much feek to engage them by this, for that is

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no gain to him. 3 Because esperally, these with have a form of Religion , if withal weak in knowledge, are most capable, in some respect, of a remarion to errour; for profane men, care not (like Gallio) what be truth, and what be errour; but a poor foul that hath some conscience, is ready to debate, and defireth the truth to be cleared, and when not for ftrong as to rid it felf, it is readily drawn away like thefe filly women Paul speaketh of, 2 Tim. 3. 6, 7. who were ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 4. Because grosse ten tations to profanity f wherewith others are carried away) are not fo taking with them, therefore the devil essayeth them with errour under colour of some truth, or new discovery of some more strict and holy way, which often prevaileth when the other would 5. Because it is most advantagious to errour. and make it digeff with others, to have one of name or parts, or piety for it, this being ordinary among most men, to look more to these who mainrain such a thing, and what such a man thinketh of it, than to the thing it felf. Therefore doth the devil drive this as a main defign whereby he may prevail over many; this was ever a great mean made use of to induce to errour, that many who were accounted god ly, did imbrace the fame, as may appear from the histories of the Novatians, Donatifts and others, who called themselves the pure and boly Church of Martyrs and took other such like titles in opposition to the Or thodox Church, whom they accounted carnel; an by this mean they did brangle many. 6. He doth this also, that he may divert the exercises of these that look honest like from self-searching repentance, or that if he cannot get them engaged to errour, he may bring them, at least, to dispute truth, whereby he eflayeth to extinguish the former conviction, or to give it a wrong mould before it be fetled; or to keep them, as it were, taken up about the shell, while he intendeth to rob them of the kirnel, and so one way or other, if he gain not all, he doth yet disquiet them,

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CHAP. IV.

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How it is that groffe delusions may come to such beight, as they often do.

IT may be also questioned, How it cometh that fuch absurd errours can come to such a height, and prevail so against the Church? Or, what way the devil by corrupt teachers doth so delude Protesfors?

There are some reasons that are more general, and others more particular and useful in the consideration of them for practice; that we may not be ignorant of the devils devices, we shall insist most in these, all of them may be drawn to three heads. 1. The Lords over-ruling, holy, just and wife (though often fecret) way of punishing mens ingratitude. 2. There is something in the devils way of carrying on the tentation. 3. There is fomething in the diflemper of Churches and perfons to be confidered: Which three, being put together, will make it not feem strange that the most grosse and absurd errour prevail. For the first, The Lord hath an over-ruling hand in such a defign, which is partly, to try his own, therefore herefies must be, I Cor. 11, 19: partly, to punish the generation of ungrate hypocrites, who receive not the love of the truth, as it is, 2 Theft. 2. in both which he is to be glorified, either in hisgrace, or justice, or both: Now these being the Lords defigns, the absurder that the errour be, ir attaineth his end the better; and appeareth to be the more judicial-like, as by comparing, Ifa. 44.18,19, and Rom. 1.21, 25, 28. &c. and 2Theff. 2, 10, 11, 12. is clear. All which places speak not only of the most grosse spiritual abominations, but of the Lords judicial hand therein,

If

What hand If it be asked, What hand the Lord can have the Lord may fuch a plague ? Or how he may be faid to fend it bave in fuch Anfw. It is not fo much to our purpose here, to dis pute the Question of Gods providence in such act a plague. ons; But for clearing of this reason, we may lav down these grounds.

1. There are spiritual plagues, wherewith God fultly punisheththe ingratitude and other fins of people, as wel as there are external and corporal plagues these places cited, 1/a.44.18,19. Rom. 1.21.&c.2Thes.2. Io. II. Rev. 7, 8, and 9. Chapters, and almost the whole Book doth confirm this: only this would be adverted, that most ordinarily grosse practices, as adultery, murther, uncleannesse of all fores, are punilhments for abusing the light of nature, as may be gathered from Rom. 1.21.25.28. But to be given up to strong delution, and to believing of lies, is a plague that ordinarily followes the abule of the light of the Golpel, as we may fee from 2 Theff. 2. 9, 10. and the may be one reason, why more commonly such grosse scandals and practices abound, where the Gospel is not, or at least, is in lesse power, and why errour prevailerh most, where the Gospel hath been, or is with more clearnesse, because they are plagues to fuch respectively. This, I lay, it is most generally, though it be not alwayes and univerfally, especially where there are some other concurring reasons to make a difference.

2. We say, that the Lord is no lesse just, holy and pure in punishing men with such plagues, than when He maketh use of some other rods or judgements, neither is there any thing in this to be atributed to Him, that is unbecoming His absolute purity and holinesse. For, 1. He doth not punish any with this plague, but such as have by their former abuse of light and other miscarriages justly deserved the same. 2. He doth not infuse any maliciousnelle in the heart, nor increase what was, but justly permits what is to break out, and overrules the same for His just ends. 3. He doth not firain them to any fuch courle,

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but doth make use of their own willingnesse therenatio, and of their free chosing to follow such a way
the the glory of His justice. 3. He doth not connive at, nor dispence with the sinful practice of any
instrument, but doth really abhor, and will also severely punish the same. So, that as the same act
hath a twofold consideration, to wir, as it is sinful, and at it is penal, So it is diversly to be ascribed,
to wir, in the first respect, to man only; and in the
last to Gods overruling providence, who can bring
good out of evil, seing there is nothing so evil, but
He can bring some good out of it, and make it subservient to Him, otherwise He that is Omnipotent and
only wise, would never suffer it to be.

We fay, although the Lord be not neither can be accessory to this delution, as it is finful, (for this impoffibility belongeth to His infinite and bleffed perfection) yet hath he a just hand in the complexed defign, which doth add exceedingly to the firength of the delution. As, 1. He may juftly give the devil way to fer on with his tentations, at one time, and and on one person, more then at another time, or in referenceto any another perion, as by proportion we may gather from the case of Job, 2. He may furnish men with gifts that are of themselves good, and justly permit them to use the fame, for the promoving of errour; this hath been often exceedingly inftrumental in the furthering of Satans defign in all ages. wherein he hath made use of some great Schollars, and men of subtile wits to oppose the truth, and to pervert the Scriptures of God, as is clear in all the herefies that ever have been; and this is no leffe just in God, to furnish with parts; an instrument of a spiritual plague, then to give ftrength and power to some whom he imployeth, in temporal judgements, who alformay be found guilty before him, for abuting of the lame. Hence it is faid, 2 Theff. 2.2. that there is not only a word and letter to shake the thinds of people at such a time, but there is also a Spirit or gift in an eminent degree, and therefore it is called,

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ver. 10. All deceivableneffe; and, no queffion, thefe that called themselves Apossies, 2 Cor. 11-13. and made Paul's gifts to be accounted weak in respecto theirs, had more than ordinary Gifts: and in this n spect, sometime the Lord faith, afalle Propher milite foretell fomething that was to come to palle; and to truly have an extraordinary gift, when yet the Lords defign is by fuch torry the peoples adherance to him. Dent. 13.1,293. Thus often promovers of errour may be gifted with ability to reason, make queries, shift arguments and places of Scripture, preach well, pray well with a great deal of eloquence, and liberty of plaufible expressions, yea, they may possibly not want, as it were, figns and wonders (as in the place formerly cited) and yet the Lords end be to try, as is faid : of this fort are such as are spoken of, 2 Ptt. 3. 16. Who wrest, or pervert Scripture to their own destruction; it is a firang word, they are unlearned and unitable, (and, it may be, are crying down learning in others) yet, faith he, they have adexterity to with the Scriptures, to coin new interpretations, possibly never heard of before to the admiration of others. And what is the consequent thereof? It is their own destruction. It had been advantage to many such themselves and others also, that they had never had fuch a gift. 3. The Lord also may some way arm the devil as his executioner to carry on this defign, by furnishing him with such instruments, giving him time, opportunities and occasions to tempt, and suffering him in many things to prevall : thus, 2. This.2: Satan is faid to have a power, and to exercise the fame, by bringing forth of lying wonders; and, no question, when the devil he getteth way, may do much, when it is faid that he put it in the heart of Judas to betray his mafter, who yet was furnished with parts; and admitted into Christs company by Himself; all which was subservient to carry on the devils and the Pharifees defign, of betraying the Lord: which norwithflanding, tended to the greater ruine of his own kingdom. 4. In

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in fuch a case also, the Lord doch justly deprive whom he mindeth to plague with that delufion, thele means, which might be useful to discern and refift the fame. As t. he may take away all outward restraints, which usually keep corrupt reachers from open and professed spreading of their errours; and in his providence, give them full way to multiply, and avowedly to purfue their defign This is to pluck up the hedge, Ifa. 5. and to fuffer the winds to blow, Rev. 7. which are ever great inlets to this judgement of delufion, when, to fay fo, there is a flood spewed out , and there is no earth to help the woman, and to dry up that floud. 2. He may take away prime lights and guides, which are ufeful to keep people right; or, if they continue, he may fuffer jealoufie, division and other things to interveen fo, that thereby their weight and authority is lessened to fuch persons: in which respect, Abab becometh lealous of Micajah, whereby the devil hath occasion to make the lies of the falle Prophets the more to be commended to him. 3. The Lord may withdraw the light that persons have and it may be some common gifts of the Spirit) and by depriving them of that, they become the more obnoxious to tentation, although it may be they think themselves wifer, and more understanding than they were: thus the Apostle calleth the Galatians foolish and bewitched, Gal. 2. 1, 2. as having fallen from that light which at first they had. 4. He may remove common convictions of the Spirit, and challenges of a natural conscience, to that they may go on in their delution without a challenge; yea, (as it is faid, Joh. 16. 2.) think that they do God good service in so doing : this isto have the conscience seared with an hot iron, I Tim. 4. 2. that waiteth upon feducing Spirits? and thus we fee, that the most vain and reasonless confidence doth often wait upon the foulest errours, as Ifa. 44. 9. unto 20. This is called, Gal. 5. 8. a perswasion in respect of its confidence, which yet cometh not of God. And the Lord may not only juffly deprive of such

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common elfts, but even of ordinary reason and indie ment, whereby men become; at least, in the profection tion of their errours, abfurd and unreasonable, with out all capablenesse of sceing the weight of a reason or receiving a conviction, or observing their own fol ly, and to carry without all respect to credit, honesty good manners, and fuch things as are even respected among civil men; yea, fometimes without respect to their own effates, or their own persons, as we may fee in the prophets of Baal, I King. 18. and many others in Antichrists kingdom; these are called by the Apostle, 2 Thess. 2. unreasonable, or absurd beastly men, as if they wanted reason: this is also a companion of delufion, and a piece of Gods judgement, as is clear from that of Ifa. 44. The Lord thinking good, for the abuse of light, to deprive men of reason, as he did Nebuchadnezar, whereby the vilest and abfurdest tentations have accelle to men, (that otherwayes may be reasonable) to carry them on with greedinesse, and without all reluctance or contradiction.

When men are in the Lords justice thus deprived, and fet upon with the tentation, which he hath letten loufe upon them, the Lord may in His providence tryft many things that may be abused, for the carrying on of this judgement, As 1. he may tryft fuch a person with such a tentation, to live in fuch a place, to have such acquaintance, &c. 2. He may tryft fuch a tentation to fall in fuch a time , as there is no external aw-band to restrain; yea, in his wishom, order it so, as that then there may be many occasions of flumbling among the Profesiors of the truth, what by scandals in practice, what by divifion and other diffempers, as the way of truth may be ill spoken of by many; and the Ordinances in that respect made vile, as is said in the case Ell's fons, I Sam. 2. Sometime he may tryft fuch tentations with some ignorant, unskilful, indextrous hands, who may rather harden than help any in the removing of their doubts: These and many such like things

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whe wife and just Lord order in His providence which may be as mares and flumbling-blocks to proud fecure hypocrites, who by their corruption may fall thereon : yez, sometime the very Ordinances and the exercifing of them, to wit, the Word. Sacraments and Discipline, may, through mens corruptions, be flumbled at more than if they were not : in this sence, when the Lord reproveth the unfaithful Prophets and Priefts, Fer. 6. 14. and the peoples not hearkening to his faithful Prophets, ver. 17. although they keeped the form of Religion, ver. 20. he doth threaten to lay flumbling-blocks before them, upon which they should fall, ver. 21. All which and many moe wayes, (as fometimes following of errour hath applause accending it, as, 2Tim. 4. 1. &c. Sometimes fr hath gain waiting upon it, as 2 Pet. 2. 2. 1 Tim. 6. 10. and Gal. 6. 12. Philip. 3.119.) being tryfted in the Lords just providence, have often much influence, through mens corruption, to make delufion the more successeful.

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6. Befide these, the Lord hath a judicial upgiving of proud, corrupt men, unto the hands of such tentations: so that when, as it were, the devil setteth on by such a blast of wind, and seeketh to winnow such and such persons, the Lord doth, as a just judge, sentence them to be committed thereto, as to the executioner of His justice; in this sense, he is said to give them up: and in this respect, such defection, as it is a punishment, is judicially permitted and ordered by Him, who willingly and purposly Sentenceth such persons to be so given up, because of former sins, whereas others whom He doth not so Sentence, are not so carried away with that same tentation.

Also the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel, and whose wayes and judgements are past finding out, may have many other wonderful and inconceivable wayes in the carrying on of this judgement; for, if all His judgements be a great depth, much more are His spiritual judgements. It is upon this ground, to wir, the considering of the Lords just severity of con-

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cluding all under fin, all in unbelief, of the reies of the lews, &c. that the Apostic dock cry out o depth of the riches, both of the mifdom and bnowledge God! How unfearchable are his judgements, and his past finding out? Therefore we shall search no form in this. Only from what is faid we may fee, that Lord hath a just hand in the over-ruling of such a lufions : and alfo, that they cannot but be ffrom and fuccesseful which are guided so, as to be executionen of His justice; this also may make men tremble the more, confidering that the opening up of fluces to le in the spait of delusion, is no lesse Gods judgemen and no leffe to be feared, than the fending of Sword or Pestilence, or the opening up the fountains of the great depths, to let in a deluge upon the earth; an were men so looking on it, and affected with it; it might poffibly be much more bounded.

CHAP. V.

How errour may be known to be a judicial ftroke, and why the Lord smiteth with it.

T may be asked here, 1. How errour may be known to be a judgement or judicial? And a for what cause most ordinarily the Lord doth

fend fuch a judgement?

We cannot infift in every occurring Question; Yet to the first, We say, 1, there is no errour or delusion:but may be well accounted penal and judicial, either as to the persons who sall therein, and vent the same, or as to others who may be insected therewith, (although it may be but a trial in reference to some) for, blindnesse of mind was a fruit and consequent of the first sin, and followeth not only as a sin, but as a punishment upon all the children of Adams stouse. And therefore as in some respect, all sollowing sins may be accounted punishments of the first, this may be so in a special manner. 2. Beside this general consideration, it is of-

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the punishment of some special sins, and in some he gathered from these Characters. 1 . When the miture of le, it is very abfurd and unreasonable. as is faid, fuch as these delutions of the Nicotaitons were because in such delusions the judgement of God doth especially appear when they cannot be thought to be confequent in any reasonable way, or, to flow from common infirmity, 2. When the persons that venticate, in respect of their conversation, parts, place or profession, someway eminent, as was formerly cleared, because so the tentation seemeth to be armed of the Lord, which usually is not for nought. When it is tryfted with such a time and with such circumfrances as hath been described; for, such things happen not by chance, but are ruled by providence. 4. When it breaketh in violently, and, it may be, carrieth away some whom men would not have sufpected, that is judicial-like, when, as it were, the Dragon with his tail and subtility, doth bring stars from heaven, and furprise some that thought themfelves without the reach of such a tentation. 4. It may be known by the gifts (to speak to) of such as carry on the same; for, as carrying on the work of the Gospel, the Lord doth furnish His Ministers, with gifts and painfulness, when He hath to do with them; So,upon the contrary, when He hath a work of judgment on the wheels, and the devil a defign of carrying on delution, the inftruments are fitted proportionably, to wit, there is a zeal carrying them here and there, So that by all means, as it were, they compasse sea and land to make Proselytes; there is desterity, quicknesse and nimblenesse in starting of doubts, wresting of Scripture, &c. as is said; and there is a fort of patience in enduring, boldnesse and confidence in attempting, and some successe, as in the case of the false Prophets against Micajab, 1 Kings. 22. and against Jeremiab, Jer.29. When, I say, corrupt inftruments are fitted by these and such like means, it is probable, that the Lord intendeth something

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thing by them which they themselves do not minde. 6. It is judicial-like, when it tryfleth on the back of a peoples having the truth, and being unfruitful under it, because, so it speakerh out the very end of its appearing, especially, if there be in people an itching-new-fanglenefle after novelties, and if there have been needleffe and affected flirrings and queffionings about leffer truths, If then greater delufion come, it doth look judicial-like, as being a ftroak for their former unsettlednesse; this is to give men up to heap up teachers to themselves, that have itching ears, 2Tim. 4.3, and this is, to give men teachers according to their own hearts, that there may be like people like priefts,, which is often threatened by the Lord. And thus of old, when the people began to miscarry in the wildernesse, in reference to the second Command, He gave them up to worship the hoast of heaven, and to miscarry in the first, as is mentioned, Acts 7. 41. 7. It appeareth to be judicial indeed when it doth hurt, either by corrupting of truth, or marring of unity, or wakening of divisions &c, which are confequents of the first four trumpets that bring Spiritual plagues, Rev. 8. These and such like charaders may sufficiently convince that the Lord is angry.

what causes p!ague delufion.

To the second we may soon answer: And, I. we do most or- say, that such a plague is not the consequent of comdinarilypro- mon out-breakings and fins of infirmity ! Nor, 2. this of ingraticude for, and abuse of, common merof cies: Nor, 3. ordinarily is it the punishment of groffe fins of the flesh, to speak so; for this is rather a fruit of that : but it doth follow upon 1. the abuse of spiritual mercies, such as the light of the truth of the Gospel, sleighted convictions, smothered challenges, broken promises made for further Reformation, and such like, as may be gathered from 2Theff. 2. 9, 10. 2. It followeth upon spiritual fins, fuch as spiritual pride, security, hypocrific and formality, keeping up of the form without the power, having truth but not the love thereof, as in the place formerly cited, and elsewhere. 3. There

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are forme fort of diftempers, which especially procure this be fide others. As. 1: an itching humor, that beginneth to loath the simplicity of truth. 2. A haffie partial humor that cannot abide found Doctrine, if it be not someway curiously drest, especially if it reprove their miscarriages both which are spoken of, 27im.4.3. 3. There is a proud lelt-conceitednelle. whereof the Apostle (peaketh, 2 Tim. 3. 4. when persons are selfie, proud, boasters, &c. such are a ready prey to fuch tentations. 4. Little respect to faithful Ministers that preach truth, may procure this plague, to get Paftors according to their own heart, and judgements that are not good, as the Lord threatneth, Ez ek. 20. and is threatned by the Lord, Job. s. ver-42. I have come in my Fathers Name, and ye havenot received me; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive. 5. It may be procured by lightnesse and puftablenesse, when folks go vainly beyond their reach to feek or meet a tentation, the Lord juitly may fmite them with their own fin; and thus reading of corrupt books, hearing of corrupt preachers, converfing with corrupt men, and such like, which the Lord hath commanded to eschew, doth not only prove in Gods righteous judgements, a snare or mids of folks infnaring, but also the procuring deserving cause of being given up to that delufion, which they make themselves obnoxious to, by going without His call, although, at first, possibly there was no positive affection that way, but, it may be, the contrary; even as suppose one hazarding, contrary to the Command, to go nigh the door of the adulterous womans house, should for that cause be given up to fall in her snare and to enter, although at first he did not intend it, as these places do infinuate, Prov. 5.8 and 6. 26, 27, 28. where he faith, to this purpose, that a man cannot take fire in his bosome and not burnt, &c. And it is faid, Prov. 22. 14. fuch as are abhorred of the Lord, shall fall in that pir. 6. There is a jangling questioning strain; this often brings on this ill, when all truths are not received, but folks begin to cast at

the leffer truths; this procureth delution in a greater height, as is faid, because every truth is precious, and when men become untender in the imaliest truthe (If any man be called fo) It is just with God to deprive them of all, even as smaller fins in practice being connived at, do bring on more groffe outbreak ings : and thus the visible Church, by her declining from the truth, in the Primitive times, and becoming more to be taken up with Ceremonies and other up necessary debates, did draw on upon themselves A tichrifts delufion at length: of this fort are ignorance in the fundamental truths, and doth proceed fro negligence, little love to, and delight in, the Wo and Ordinances, little bemoaning of the falls an miscarriages of others, when we hear them to be vertaken with fuch foares; and many fuch like thin might be named, but we will not infift further.

We come then to the fecond thing proposed, that is to confider how corrupt Teachers do carry of their design: and what means the devil weth by then to prevail with poor fouls, for to cast at the truths God, and to drink up the most absurd delusions and although we cannot reach Sarans depths, he he ying much subtilty, and many wiles, to carry his defigns, as it is, 2 Cor. 11: 2. and it is called I 4. 14. a cunning craftines, whereby they lie in wait! deseive. Yet feing we dught not to be ignorant of h devices, 2007. 2.11. We shall gather somethings from Scripture, that may be useful to arm us against the fame: and to take up his way the better, we may 1. The inftruments which he chooleth 2. The method that he keepeth in tempting by them 2. The means which he useth, or common places from which he drawerh his arguments, 4. The manner how these are carryed on.

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By what means, and how Satan drives outhis plague among people.

Aran doth not act in this delign immediately, nor doth he act indifferently by any infirmment, but he hath his special ministers; as it were, fet apart for that end, as the Apostle speaketh zeor. 1.15. He hath many subjects indeed, but befide thele, he hath some special ministers for this defign, as our bleffed Lord Jesus hath Ministers specially fer apart in His Kingdom. Concerning which we may observe, T. That he employeth some more emmently to traffique, as it were, in this very imployment, who by compassing sea and land, and travelling to and fro may further his defign, such were these who were called faile Apostles, 2. Cor. 11.12. Revel. 2,3. and in the hiftory of the Atts we will find fuch coming from one place to another, as from Jerufalem to Antinch, Act. 15 and elsewhere, purpolly to spread their entours, as the Apostles did travel for preaching the truth. 2. He hath particular instruments, preaching in particular places, that are, as it were, his miniflers of fuch and fuch bounds, as in the place cited. a) Befide thefe, he hath flickling underhand-dealers who, not appearing openly, yet creep into houses; and ordinarily he hath some women, who are specially employed in this, as he hath Ferebel the Propheteffe in the Church of Thyatira, Rev. 2, and fuch he had in the primitive herefies particularly one of the Montanifts because such are often vehement in what they are engaged in , and have accelle to pervert and feduce, which others cannot eafily have; his affiating of them withal to speak sometimes to the admiration of others, seemeth more wonderful like. 4. Whom ever he maketh use of, they are someway fitted (to fay fo) for the defigns they are employed in, although their manner of carrying on these defignes may be diverse, as experience showeth.

2. In

proceeding.

what is his his in the method which he followeth, we will of find this progresse, I. He setteth himself by all means to make the Ministers of the truth odious and contemptible, and that either by crying down a Mi. niftery altogether, or making all indifferently to be Ministers, which is, upon the matter, one with the former : this was Korah, Dathan, and Abirams fault Num. 16. which is applied to corrupt teachers, Jude It. or if that fail, he endeavoureth to make their perions odious, who are in the station, thus we see. even Paul is traduced bythe falle teachers of Corinth and Galatia. The reason of this, is, 1. because Minifters are appointed, and gifts are given to men by-Jefus Chrift, purpofely to guard the Church from be-Ing toffed to and fro with corrupt Doctrine, by the fleight of men, as it is Ephef. 4. 11, 12, 13,14, that he may therefore have the more eafily his will, he endeavoureth to bring the Watchmen in suspicion. and to render them useless. 2. Teachers of the truth. and corrupt teachers cannot both together have peoples affection, and no teacher readily will have weight, if he have not affection from his hearers: Therefore he by all means endeavours to traduce Minifters, that by excluding them, he may make way for his Emissaries, for they are like corrival wooers fuiting the same Bride, So that both cannot have her affection, to this purpose is the Apostles word, Gall 4.17. they zealously affect you, but not well, yea, they would exclude you ; it is in the Original, and on the Margent, they would exclude us, (that is, the true Apostles ; that you might affect them. And confidering the great accesse that the devil hath to destroy, when once Ministers are in contempt, it is no marvel he begin at the removal of this impediment out of his way; and feing he attempted this against the great Apostle Paul, so often and frequently, it cannot be thought firange that he feek to defame others. If it be enquired how he profecuteth this ? We

may observe these particular wayes; As, I. Al-

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he wakeneth Queffions, I i. concerning the calling of such and such men , if they be duly called Minifters or not; thus Paul's Apostleship is questioned. because he had not conversed with the Lord; and for this cause he is put in the Epiftles to the Corinthians and Galatians, to largely to vindicate his Calling and Apostleship, and to produce as it were, not only his Commission, but the Seal thereof also, particularly, 2007. 2. 2, 3. and the occasion thereof is expressed, 26or. 13. 3. fince ye feek a proof of Chrift fpeaking in me. 2. He endeavoureth the discrediting of their gifts, as if the matter spoken by them were common, their expressions mean, and their carriage base and contemptible, as we may see in the instance of that same great Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 10.1. and 11.6. he is called rude in speech. 2. This is especially by comparing them with the fair shew of corrupt teachers in their flourithing, spiritual, ravishing-like discourfes, which are by many counted misteries, and are called depths, Revel. 1. 24. The Lord indeed calleth them depths of Satan, but it is not to be thought that they themselves meaned so, who yet are said to give them the name of depths; sometimes unconceivable non-sense, will be admitted, and plain truths and duty despised. 4. They cry-up their revelations and spiritual atteamments in an immediate manner beyond what is in the Ministers of Christ: Therefore, 2 Cor. 11. 12. Paul is put to compare himself with them, and particularly in revelations, and fingular manifestations of God to him. 5. They endeavour to make the Ministers of Christ to be effected coverous felf-feekers, earthly-minded, and such like, because of their taking wages to preach the Gospel, as if they were making a prey of the people, which is often objected to the Apolile, and answered by him in these Epifiles to the Corinthians. 6. When evidences fail, then they raile luspicions of Ministers crastinesse and underhand dealing, as if in every thing they were feeking their gain, as that Apostle answereth it, 2 Cor. 12. 16.17. 7. Whatever the Ministers carriage be, they

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ct he He in wait to traduce it, if he be more meek and fr. millar in his converfing, they fay he is a carnal man. a friend and lover of finners and corrupt men as was faid of our bleffed Lord; if he be more aufterein checking their faults, or retired in flunning their company, he is called intolerable and devilifhly proud. as was imputed to John; if he take wages or gifts, he is accounted greedy and covetous; if he refuse and abstain; is expounded to be want of love and respect to them, as was also faid of Paul when he continued firm in his former resolution, 2007.11.10.11. 8. They are ufually counted proud, exalters of themselves above. and despilers of the people, and to take too much on them to the prejudice of the Flock, whose liberty and priviledges corrupt teachers ordinarily pretend to vindicate againft Ministers tyrannous encroachments (as they fay) This was pretended by Korab, Dathan, and Abiram against Aaron, and was revived and followed in the primitive times by these corrupters, spoken 9. They endeavour to have the people of, Jude 11. fulpecting the Minister's love to them, as 2 Cor. 11. 11. yea, that all his freedom to them, and his speaking against their faults and errours is bitternesse, railing and the like, which the Apostle toucheth, Gal. 4.16. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? 10. It is ordinary to charge Ministers with lightnesse and changeablenesse, and that therefore much weight is not to be laid on them, for they think one thing this year, (fay they) and alter the next, when yet, it may be edification hath moved them in fuch a change; this hath been imputed to Paul, 2Cor. 1. 17. purposedly to make his word to have little weight, and it is no marvel that that same way be followed in reference to others. For this end also, where there is any personal fault in a Minister, it is not past over but exceedingly aggreaged; yea, though it hath been in his youth, before his conversion or entry into the Ministery, it is not forgotten, if it may serve to defame the holy Calling: For preventing of this, it is required of Ministers, that they be of good report, even among

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mong those that are without; and it is like the falle spoftles spared not to ubbraid Paul with his former conversation and perfecution. 11. Differences of judgement and divisions among Ministers, are much made use of for that end, even sometimes when they are but apparent: Thus Paul is faid to preach another doctrine, by the falle teachers, than those at Ternsalem did, whereupon he is often put to show the harmony that was betwixt them, as particularly in the Epiftle to the Galatians; and Fosephus marketh, that Ahab's false teachers did oppose Elias his Prophecy (wherein it is faid that dogs should lick Abab's bloud at Jezreel) to Mitajah, who faid he should die at Ramoth-gilead; Alfo, that others did harden Zedekia,by this that Ezekiel faid, that he should not see Babylon and that Jeremiab faid he should be carried thereto; which they took to be contrary, and did thereby feek, to defame the Prophets, and to weaken the effeem of their Prophecies; and though there was no real difference there, yet it sheweth how, and to what end, they lie in wait to aggreage the differences of God's Servants, though but apparent, which should make Ministers carefully avoid those things. Again, secondly, Though, at first, principal truths are not altogether and plainly denied, Yet by degrees he doth engage many, 1. To reject some lesse sundamental truths concerning Government, communion with others in the Ordinances, and such like. 2. He draweth them to seperate in practice from the fellowthip of others, under the pretext of more purity and spiritualnesse; this seems to be express by Jude, v. 19. These are they who seperate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit, although it is infinuared that they did pretend to it: And indeed this way was followed in the first heresies, which began at small things, as thole of the Novatians, Donatifis, &c. who at first only separated to eschew the impurity of promiscuous communion. 2. He cometh then to quarrel expressions that are used by the Orthodox, and to commend as it were, a new kind of language; for which caule, the,

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the Apostle commendeth the holding fast the form of found words, 2Tim. 1412. And thefe corrupt teachers are faid to speak great swelling words of vanity, and to have expressions much more weighty like, than what formerly hath been used, Jude 16. Thus the Arian will not admit the word opposes, or confubstantial and a Council must be called to lay by that : and for they come to question, in the next place, the Truth is felf, alleaging men are too confident to determine fuch things . It's not clear, much may be faid against it. and fuch like; whereby, under pretext of doubting. they endeavour to awake scruples in others, that they may be disposed the more to admit of their resolutions. 4. Absurdiries are laid down as consequences that follow-upon Truths; and thus the doctrine of Providence. Election and Reprobation, &c. are loaded with horrible consequences and absurdities, pretended to follow on them, and so the doctrine of Gods absolute Soveraignity, and Justification by free grace. were loaded in the primitive times, as if there by Paul had raught that men might do evil that good might come of its. That the Law was wholly made void: That men might fin securely, because grace did so much the more abound, as in the second, third, and fixth Chapters of the Epiftle to the Romans, is clear, 5. He endeavoureth to diminish mens hatred and zeal against errours and the most abourd opinions, that he may either obtain some actual toleration to them. or, at least, keep off such hard constructions of them; for, if that be gained at first, although errour ger not a direct approbation, yet a great point is gained, if he can get fome to tolerate, and others to hear: This is condemned in the Church of Thyatira, that the Officers luffered Jezebel to teach, and that the people, who are there called Chrift's fervants, did countenance and hear her; And it feems something of this was in Corinth, which maketh the Apostle say, that evil communication corrapteth good manners, and that therefore men should not become cold in reference to erroup, although they be not tainted with it? I Cor.

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15. 33. And upon this ground the most groffe Beredicks of old and of late, asSocinians, Arminians, those of the Family of Love, and others of that kind, have maintained a liberty in prophefying a problematicknesse in the main truths of the Gospel, and a toleration in matters of doctrine, &c. as principles subfervient to their defign. 6. He proceedeth then to have the persons of such as are tainted with errour. much beloved and effeemed of by others, that there may be the more familiar accesse to converse with them, and the readier disposition to receive their leaven from them: this he doth fometimes by making mens gifts in their quicknesse and nimblenesse to be commended, sometimes by the seeming gravity, auflerity and holinesse of their carriage, for which cause they are said to be wolves in sbeeps cloathing. Mat. 7, and he is faid to transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into the ministers of Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 14. Sometimes by flattery, and feeming sympathy and affection, for which the lying Proight phet is called the tail; and if it were by no other mean, he doth it by their reproaching of honest and faithful Ministers, and, it may be, hitting upon some real ills among them, which is often but too too pleafing to the carnal humour of the generality of people, as in the instances formerly given is clear. Laftly, when this is obtained, then there is easie accelle to make the most grosse Doctrines and delusions to be drunken in, which at first would have been abhorred, by these degrees Antichrists delusion came to its height, and by such steps, some, that at first only seperated from the Novatians and Donatifts, came at last to that height of delusion, as to become Circumcellians (astrange wild kind of delusion) Anthronepomorphits, and fuch like.

3. The means and arguments that are used to carry on this delution, are to be observed, which are these or such like. 1. The carriage and conversation of the abetters thereof; is made very plaufible, fair and pproveable-like, that there may be no suspiction of

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the devils influence on fuch a work; Therefore they are faid to be transformed into the Ministers of Christ: thus the Pharifees make long prayers, live aufterely. &c. thereby to gain reputation to their traditions: for . the devil would mar all his delign, if he did not look like an Angel of light : yea, there will be much feeming like zeal, patience and fuffering in fuch, as may be gathered from 2 Cor. 11.22. and in experience it will be found, that the most grosse Herericks in do-Arine, have had (at least for a long time) a great shew of holinesse before others, as might be instanced in the greatest deluders.

2. It is useful in this design, to have some that have Church-power, and beareth the name of Officers, engaged, that they may come in, not under the name of Ministers of Satan, but as it is, 2 Cor. 11 221. as Ministers of Christ; and therefore, if no ordinary call can be alleged by them, they readily difclaime all fuch, and yet pretend a calling to be Preachers of Christ, of his Gospel, and such like: as we may see by these falle teachers of old, who called themselves Aposiles and Prophetesses, as having fome extraordinary call from God, thereby making

way for their delutions.

3. They follow their defigns under a pretext of advancing holipesse and spirituality, to a higher degree. and of having a more humble way of living, and of being a further length in high attainments, than other men can win at, or are capable of: thus some are outwardly despiters of all pride, and of giving respect to Men, and that as the Apostle faith, Col. 2. 18. by a fort of voluntary humility, and intruding upon things which they have not feen, casting in the mean time, at common and plain truths.

A 4. mean, is, the pleafing of ears and itching humours, with great swelling words, new notions, and large discourses of non-sense, delivered with great confidence, when as the Apostle faith, I Tim. 1. 7. They know not what they fay, nor whereof they affirm, yet often such discourses are sublime myste-

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ries to the ignorant and fuch as loath the fimple truth. they hrift; 5. They make use of a pretext of good will and advantage to their thus they fpeak unto, as it is, fere-Rom. 16. 18. by good words and fair speeches they ions : deceive the simple, and by pretending to wish their d not fouls well, and to pity their blindnesse and hazard much they are in, they creep into their houses and affecti-1 , 25 ons, 2 Tim. 3. 6. and lead fimple persons caprive : ience by this pretext, the serpent beguiled Eve at the first, n dopromifing some advantage by hearkening to him, and Thew

> 6. Sometimes there is much more pretended ftrictnesse, especially in outward things: thus some of old added the observation of Moses Law to the Gospel. as if that were a more perfect and firict way, and upon this ground have so many traditions been

this way is followed by corrupt teachers fill, as it is.

brought in into the Church.

2 Cor. II. 3.

7. There is a pretending to more Christian liberty and freedom from the bondage of Ordinances of whatever fort, fo as men must not be tyed to hear preachings, keep Sabbaths, Pray, Praise and such like, which are (fay they) but formes and burthens to Saints, and unbecoming that freedom and spiritualnesse that grown Believers should have. Thus fuch deceivers and these that are deceived with them. are faid to promise liberty to whomsoever they propose their delusions, while in the mean time all of them are made fervants to corruption.

pretending to know Christs 8. There is gr mind, and confide a reging of the writings of His Apostles, and that in a seeming convincing way: Thus. 2. Theff. 2. 2. there are mentioned Spirit. Word and Letter, as proceeding from Paul, whenas he himself is disclaiming such interpretations as they

did pur on him.

9. They use to alleage the authority of men, and to oppose such to these who oppose their errours: thus the Pharifees alleaged Moses, and the Nicolaitans Nicolas; and it is like, the false Apostles that came

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from Jerufalem, did oppose other Apostles authority rants, as if they had preached nothing but what they preached in Jerufalen; and very often the infirmities of come great men, are flumbled upon, and made arguments against truth.

10. Many are flitfed up to vent queries and capiltions questions, (as often the Pharifees did, by fending their emissaries to Christ) that some advantage may be gotten that way, and these that are for truth

entangled.

11. Sometimes he maketh use of humane reason, and cryeth down every thing that seemeth not confonant to it: upon which ground the refurrection was denied by the Sadduces and some of the Corinthians, I Cor. 15. and the most fundamental truths of the Gospel, are by the Socinians and others unto this day. Sometimes again, all use of reason, learning or prudence is disclaimed; in which respect, such men are dilled upreasonable, 2 Thes. 2. and bruit beasts,

2 Pet. 2. and Jude, 10.

12. They endeavour by all means to carry the fayour of the civil Magistrates, and to have Ministers especially such as are zealous against them, made hateful and suspected unto them, and the gaining of this hath a double advantage with it to their cause, as it strengtheneth it, and weakeneth the truth: this we fee the falle Prophets did of old. I King. 22. Jer. 26 Amos 7. 10. and so endeavoured the Scribes and Pharilees to engage the Romans against Christ, and against His Apostles; South did the Arians and other Hereticks, and so have artichrists emissaries ever endeavoured to flir up ever Magistrates against faithful Ministers, as most hateful persons: This they carry on by such like means. 1. They pretend to give the Magistrates more submission, and charge faithful Ministers with sleighting of their authority, for they know this to be a thing well pleafing to Magistrates: Thus the faithfulnesse of honest Ministers is accounted disobedience and harred, and the lying flattery of such is given out for respect and obedi-

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our upon faithful Minufters, as factious and curners of the world upfide-down, fowers of fedicion, as Acts 21. 5. rroublers of the peace, who do keep the people in a continual ffir, and croffe their deligns, and mar the absolutenesse of Magistracy; So, Elijab is counted an enemy to Abab, and a troubler of Ifrael. 2. They vent many groundless calumnies against them, as if they were guilty of many groffe evils; Thus Athanafius and many others were charged by the Arians; as murderers and adulterers, and some pretended proofs made thereof: Yea, it was alleaged to Conflantine, that Athanasins had medled with civil matters (which was derogatory to his authority) by inhibiting all Corns to be exported from Egypt. 4. They bring the Magistrates in tops with them, by appellations from Church-judicatories to them, and feeming to plead an absolutenesse to Magistrates in things Ecclefiaftick; Thus Herericks in all times have sheltered themselves under this pretext, till Magistrates declared against them, and then they cast them off alfo, as of late in the practices of the Sociaians and Arminians hath been made out. 5. They represent them to Magistrates as unsufferable, in respect of their plain threatnings, and that such are not to be endured so to affront Authority, and to weaken these than professe so much to respect the same, thus Amos is represented, chap. 7.10. by Amaziah Priest of Bethel, and often Jeremiah is so by the false Prophets in his time. 6. They propole faithful Ministers as unwarrantably arrogating a kind of infallibility to themsclves, and thereby derogating from all others; so is that word, I King. 22. What way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to you? and by a certain audacious confidence, feek, as it were, to put out faithful Ministers as despicable men, not worthy to be credited, as in the cases cited; and fer.28. and elsewhere, and often by fuch means their infinuations and flarreries do exceedingly prevail for promoving their deligns. Augustine chargeth the Donatists with this, that in their application to Julian, they used this phrase, quonian and the solam justicia babet locum: and this was (saith he) when he knew he was an apostar, Epist. 48.

The last thing in this, is the manner how this defign is carried on by such corrupt teachers, which is not alway the same in all, and may in part be collected from what is faid; Yet we may name these particu-1. It is covertly and subtily done, therefore they creep in with infinuations, looking far otherwife than they are. 2. It is done hypocritically, 17im.4. They speak lies in bypocrifie, and do pretend both to be Religious and friends to Religion and Truth, while they do fo, 2. It is done sometimes vehemently, as it were knocking with force at hearts, So it shaketh the hearer by the bignesse of words, peremptorinesse of threatnings, confidence of Affertions, and vehemeney in the manner, fo that it hath(as the Scripture faith) a strength and power with it, and therefore is compared to a spair or floud, Rev. 12. and is called strong delufion, 2 Theff. 2. 4. This is done with all diligence, compassing sea and land, leaving no mean uneffayed. And, 5. with a kind of feeming fimplicity, zeal and finglenesse, and with many professions thereof, as may be gathered from the inftances formerly given; and from Gal. 4. 17. where it is faid, they Zealously affect you, but not well, and from Rom. 10. 2. 6. This is done with great boldnesse, which appeareth, 1. In pretending to eschew no suffering, or to fear no hazard that may follow on their opinion, if it were to give their body to be burnt, and, it may be doing much in this. 2. It may be fluck to by them at their sicknesse, even in their death beds, at it is not unlike it was with Jezebel and some of her followers, Rev. 2. 21, 22. for, neither is the devil filenced, nor corruptions removed by ficknesse or 3. It appeareth in confident undertaking to dispute with any; yea, oftentimes seeking occasion of that: Thus the Libertines arise and dispute with Stephen, Acts 6. and it is like, the falle teachers of Corinth, that faid of Paul, 2 Cor. 10. 10. that his bodily

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dily prefence was weak, and his speech contemptible. would not have declined to have disputed even with him. 4. It kythes in their confident trufting to their own judgements, and their undervaluing of all others. s. It appeareth in confident afferting of any thing, and not only in the reproaching of any private perfon , but of Officers and Ordinances , 2 Pet. 2. 10. they are not affraid to speak evil of dignities.

By these considerations, we may in part see how delution cometh to such strength and height, in respect of these who carry on this corrupt doctrine. We come now to confider a third thing, to wit, What accession is from the peoples fide for the promoving thereof, which we may draw to these three. I. There is something finful in a peoples former carriage whereby delufion is exceedingly firengthned against them, when felves. it cometh as a just plague for former miscarriages; But

of those fins we have already spoken.

2. A peoples present temper, or rather distemper. may have much influence on this, and exceedingly dispose them for, and cast them open to, the tentation. As, first, lightnesse of mind, unsertlednesse in the truth; these the Scripture calleth unstable souls, 2. There is an itching new-fangle 2 Pet. 2. 14. humour, defirous of some new thing, and loathing simple Doctrine, as it is, 2 Tim. 4. 3. 3. There is too great facility in believing the spirits, without trying of them, which its like hath been in Galatia, whereby they were foon drawn away to another Gospel, and to credit some infinuaters foolishly, as, chap. 1. 6. and 3. 1. 4. A secure carnal frame, wanting exercise of conscience, is dangerous, So are also proud presumptuous persons, (that have an high efteem of themselves, and such as are self-willed; who are mentioned, 2Pet. 2.10.) in great hazard of this : The tentation will also sometimes take advantage of some persons who are jumbled in mind, and under some weight and heavinelle, and come in under pretext of remedying the fame, many such diffempers there are, whereof some may be gathered from what

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is this of the finful causes that procure this, because. that which doth meritorioully deferve to be fo punished, proveth often also a disposing mids for receiv-

ing of the rentation; But we forbear.

3. People often by their carriage do promove this plague of delution upon themselves, casting themselves in the snare, 1. By needless familiar converfing with such persons. 2. Going to hear them, 2. Purchasing or reading their books. 4. Hazarding to entertain their doubts, and to profecute their arguments and questions, to plead for their opinions, and fuch like, shunning withall of such means and wayes as might recover them, and entertaining prejudice at fuch as would aim thereat, and fuch like, whereby that of the Prophet is verified, The prophets teach lies, and my people love to have it fo. Now, if all these be put together, can it be thought strange to fee the greatest delusion prevail? We have been the longer on these, not only for the confirming of that truth, but for drawing together in some short view. a little map, as it were, of these wayes, whereby the devil driveth on his defign by the cunning craft of these that lye in wait to deceive.

CHAP. VII.

what is called for as duty in such a case.

T resteth now that we should consider what is duty in such a time, or case, when delusion is lesse or more doth prevail, or is very like to prevail? It cannot be denied, but that something is calledfor, and is necessary where the danger is so great; and also it is evident, that something more than ordinary is necessary, because the ill is more than ordinary. The remedy therefore must be proportionable and timous; for, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, Gal. 5.9. And experience proveth, that such ills do fret and corrupt, as doth a gangrene, 2 Tim. 2. 17. The difficulty is in determining what is to be done, wheretule.

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in, not only the piery, zeal and confcience of men will have exercise, but also their prudence and parts.

The loofing of this question will relate to three ranks of men, 1. To Church officers, especially to Ministers. 2. To Magistrates. 3. To people in private stations. Yet before we positively say any thing. We shall, 1. show what is not the remedy called-for, 2. We shall shew what is called for, but is not sufficient. 2. What seemeth to be called for as sufficient.

As to the first. There are two extremities to be fhunned, which we shall landown in two Asserti-

ons.

Affert. I. An absoluce and unlimitted forbearance what is not and toleration of all errours, and of the promoters the proper thereof, is not the due remedy that is called for in remedy or fuch a time, in reference to such evils. This, I suppole is clear, if there were no more in Scripture than fuch a cafe. what is comprehended in these Epistles, Rev. 2. and For, 1. the Angel of Ephefus is commended. chap.2.2. that he could not bear or endure them that were evil, to wit, the falle Apostles: This enduring then cannot by the duty, seing Christ commendeth the contrary. 2. He doth reprove Pergamos, ver. 14. because they had such amongst them that held the dodrine of Balaam, that is, because they suffered them. And, 2. this is clearly expressed in the Epistle to Thyatira, ver. 20. I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce My servants. There can be nothing more clear than this; and it is the more observable, that this not-forbearing is commended in Ephefus, where things in their own particular condition are not altogether right; and the other Churches are reproved for neglect of this, even when their own particular conditions are right. Which sheweth, That the Lord loveth zeal against such scandals, and abhorreth forbearance of them. What was formerly faid in the Doctrine, What is clear in the practice of Scripture, both in examples and commands that are given therein in reference to this, and what may be further

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further faid in the politive part of this direction, will clear this.

And whatever humane prudence and carnal fainting would fuggeft concerning such a way, as that it were fitteft to deal with persons, in such a distemper, no otherwaves than absolutely to forbear them at leaft, fo far as relateth to these diffempers as such ; vet it is clear this is not Gods Ordinance fo to do, nor the remedy that is by Him appointed: And therefore there is no promise by which we may expect a bles-fing to it, although for etimes the Lord, who is abfolutely Soveraign, may condescend without any means, to dry up and bound a floud of errour, even when men are guilty of forbearing: The effect is not to be attributed to mens finful forbearance, but to Gods gracious condescendence.

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Affert. 2. We say on the other hand, That an inbe ef different, rigid, equal pursuing, or not enduring of every thing that is an errour, or of every perion who may be in some measure tainted, is not the suitable remedy or duty that is called for in reference to fuch a case. For , as neither all errours, nor all persons are alike. So neither is the same way at all times to be followed, because, what may be edifying in one case, may be destructive in another. And as therefore there is prudent difference to be made, in reference to feandals in practice, and persons in respect of different scandals, yea, even of different rempers are diverfly to be dealt with, So it is also to be here Men are to walk, as they may most probably attain the great end, edification, which ought to be the scope in this, as in all other Ordinances: And therefore there can be no peremptory rule concluded, that will meet all cases and persons, as hath been said: We fee even the Apostles putting difference between perfons and feandals, according to the feveral cafes for, fornetimes they Excommunicate, as in the instance of Hymeneus and Phyletus, sometimes they infired doctrinally, as Paul doth the Church-members of corinth and Galatia; others he threateneth,

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and yet doth not actually Sentence them . as he doth false teachers in these Churches: Sometimes again, no particular Apostle alone doth decide the question (although doctrinally they might) but there is a Synod called judicially and authoritatively to decide the same, as, Act. 19.

The reason of the 1. is because these errours of Hymeneus and Phyletus, were of themselves groffe, defiroying the faith, and obstinately and blasphemousle adhered to. 2. He instructeth and expostulateth with the people of Corinth, and proceedeth not to the highest Censure. I. Because they were not seducers. but were seduced by others. 2. They could not be accounted obflinate, but might be thought to have finned of infirmity; Therefore more gentle and foft means are to be applied for reclaiming of them. 2. They were a numerous body, and therefore Excommunication or cutting off, could not be expected to attain its end 4. They were in a present distemper, questioning the Apostles authority; he seeketh rather therefore to be again acknowledged by them, that fo both his word and his rod might have weight, whereas if he had smitten in their distemper, they had rather broken off further from their subjection. These are clear, befide what may be faid of the nature of the scandal or errour.

2. He threateneth the corrupt teacher with offcutting, because they were leaders and seducers, and so deserved to be more severely dealt with, than those that were feduced by them, although, possibly, as drunk with these same errours: Yet, though he threaten, He doth spare for a time to firike, not out of any respect to those corrupt teachers, or from any connivance at their errour, but out of respect to the poor feduced people, for whose edification Paul forbare, even when the weapons were in readinesse to avenge all disobedience; he abstained, I say, because such people having a prejudice at him, and being bewitched by these teachers, might more readily in that diftemper have cleaved unto them, and have forfaken faken Paul, which would have proven more destructive to them; he seeketh therefore, first, to have their obedience manifested, and so not only for beareth them, but even those corrupt teachers, for a time, for the peoples edifying, as may be gathered from

2 Cor. 10, 6, and chap. 12, v. 19.

Laftly, I faid, Sometimes Synods or Councils are called, as in that place, Act. 15. which in other cases we find not, I. Because then that errour was new. and it's like wanted not its own respect from many of the Church, Therefore a Council of Officers joyned together to decide it which is not necessary again, after that decision is past; but Ministers are doctrinally and by discipline to maintain the same as we see Paul doth maintain, in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, the conclusion of the former Synod. 2. This Synod is conveened not for want of light (for, any of the Apostles, as such, were infallibly inspired to decide in the same, and had in their preaching decided it) but it is to make it have the more weight with others, and therein to be a precedent to us. 3. That was a spreading errour, which did not affect one place only, but many Churches; and it's like that many Believers were in hazard to be shaken therewith: Therefore the most weighty remedy is called for. 4. There was need now, not only of light to decide the doctrinal things, but there was also need of directions for helping folks how to carry in reference to fuch times, fo as to eschew the fnare of errour on the one hand, and of giving offence upon the other, as we may fee by the decrees of that Synod; Therefore in fuch cases, not only would men feverally endeavour the duty of their stations, but they would joyntly concur and meet judicially, or extrajudicially, as occasion calleth, to deliberate and consult in these things of so great and common concernment: for, seing the Church is one city, and one lump, a little fire may hazard all, and a little leaven corrupt all, and unwatchfulnesse at one part, or post, may let in enemies to destroy all. It is needful therealth judi to b be i a di fone

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fore, that in some cases there he mutual concurrence. although it be not necessary at all times to have a judicial meeting, nor at any time is a prefent duty to be suspended by any person, if no such meeting can be had. What is faid doth demonstrat that there is a difference to be made in reference to errours, perfons and cases.

CHAP. VIII.

When some errours are to be forborn.

F it should be enquired, how this difference is to be made? or, how it may be known when without guilt there may be some forbearance, when not'? Anw. This is indeed difficult, and we will not undertake in particulars either to be fatiflying or peremptory; yet we supose the confidering of these general Distinctions will be helpful, and the application of them necessary, in this case. I. We some necess would diffinguish betwixt some errours and scan- sary and dals and others, and that both in respect of their nieful difgroinesse and evidence: for some errours are, as Peter tinctions. calleth them, 2 Pet. 2.1,2. pernicious and damnable, as striking against the special Truths of the Word of God, or inferring groffe practices with them, as this of the Nicolaitany did, and hazarding the fouls of the maintainers of them, not as other fins of infirmity, but in respect of the principles which they imply and of this fore are many both errours and practices. Again, Other things may be errours, that are contrary to Truth, but not destructive unto, nor alrogether inconfiftent with, the foundation, but such a thing, as possibly many true Saints may be taken with, and yet have accelle to God and may enter Heaven, although they should die in that opinion; of which fort are many things that are debated amongst orthodox Divines; and indeed there is nothing but it hath a truth or a fallhood in it, yet are not all of equal necessity and weight. Of the first fore was that errour, which

the falle Apostles endeavoured to bring-in, that is, the adding of the practice of the ceremonial Law to Christ in justification, and the mixing-in of works moral and ceremonial therein, as from the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians may be gathered. Of the fecond kind, was the debate for meats and other things. mentioned, Rom. 14. and in the Epiftles to the Corinthians. Of the first, we say, there ought to be no tolerance, Therefore the Lord doth here reprove it; and in the Epiffles to the Romans and Corinthians . Paul doth plainly and powerfully refute them and reprove them, even when it was exceeding ill taken, and they were ready to count him an enemy, because he told them the truth, Gal. 4. Yet will he not forbear, because a little leaven of that sort will leaven the whole and hazard the making of his labour among them to be in vain.

Of the lecond fort, we say, That there is a mode ration called-for in it, and Ministers are not alwayes called either doctrinally, or by Discipline, judicially to reprove or censure them: I will not say but sometimes it may be meet to discover the least errour, and it may be by circumstances so aggreged, that it may be needful judicially to take notice of it, as when it's involved with offence and ready to breed Schism or Scandal, or in such like cases (in which respect there are some things mentioned in the decree, Att. 14. which are not very material in themselves, as the eating of things strangled) yet, we say, it is not simply and alwayes necessary for Ministers to presse at the convincing of all who maintain fomething different from. truth, or which is supposed to be so by them, if it be of things extra-fundamental, or, which have not direct or palpable influence upon the violating offaith. or corrupting of manners, much leffe to centure for the maintaining of it. For, it is not of such that these Epiftles speak: And we see . Rom. 14. and in the Epistles to the Corinthians, in the debate about means and earing of things facrificed to idols, and fuch like, wherein though there was still a right fide and a

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wrong, yet doth he rather presse the sorbearing of these debates, than the dipping into them, not affricting men alwayes to sollow this or that, providing it be done without breach of unity and charity. Hence it is that although there be somethings he will give no sorbearance unto, but authoritatively and ministerially he decideth in them; yet in the same Episses there is something amongst the Saints that he seeketh rather to heal, and to obtain mutual forbearance in, than peremptorily to decide. See Rom. 14. 1Cor.

8. 2, 3, & c. Phil. 2. 3.

2. There are some truths and practices evident, which by the light of the Word may be folidly demonstrated to an impartial and unbyassed searcher; and some contrary errours and scandals, that are at the first obvious (and, it may be; even to a natural conscience) to be such, so that although men would use tergiversations, and say as Hymeneus and Phyletus did , 2 Tim. 2. 17. that there were no refurrection to come, because the Scripture speaketh of a spirituall refurrection, which in the Believer is paffed already. And although many deluded persons, who will not admit of diffinctions according to reason, in such a case, may be drawn away with them, and adhere still to them; yet are the things demonstrable to these that are even but of ordinary reach, by found grounds from the Scripture, and that convincingly: Other things, again, may be truths, and there may be to some persons a possibility of reaching them by many consequences from Scripture, yet are they not so clear to many; whereupon it is, that men, yea, even learned and godly men, do differ in their apprehensions of several truths, the Lord so thinking good to bridle mens humours and to let us see the necessity of humility and sobernesse, and this may be in the meanestlike things; these the Apostle, Rom. 14. 1. calleth doubtful disputations, as being things wherein unto many, at least there is not such evidence attainable as to flay the minds of ordinary people, or to refute the ontrary affertions of any adversary, of which are Genealogies,

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Genealogies, and other things that Paul mentioneth to Timothy, I Tim. 1.4. and calleth them endlesse, because there is no setled ground to rest on, but one question doth generate another; and so the principle that must be laid down for clearing such a thing to one, is also disputable to another as the thing it self is and men know but in part, even those that are eminent, fo that an universal harmony in these cannot well be expected: In reference to this, we fay, Than greater peremptorineffe is required in the first for than in the fecond, wherein, by reason of the practice of the Apostles in Scripture, yea, and of necessity there is a torbearance requifire, Yet we would beware of parriality in accounting truths, either evident of dispurable, as men (according as they are judged) are too apt to do; it is better therefore to try these by the common account that the Godly and Learned have had in all times of fuch truths, if there hath been ftill difference, and vermoderation in these differences Nor would this be tryed onely by one age or time (wherein a point may be more agitate than at another time) but more generally, especially when the arguments on either fide want that evidence that the reasons brought for other truths have, and are so fully fer down in Scripture, That amongst godly and learned men in all ages there hath been a general confent.

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Again, 3. We would diffinguish bewixt errours and the consequents of them, or practices following there upon; there may be somethings truly errours that may and should be forborn in themselves, yet their consequents ought not to be forborn, and this also may be at one time, and in one Church more necessary to be adverted to, than in another; because consequents of schism, faction, division, &c. may sometimes follow on the meanest errours. And seing these are alwayes enemies to edification, even when they arise from the least ground, they are never absolutly to be forborn; for, to say, I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and for one to think such a man a better Preacher than an other

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other; feemeth to be no great matter; yet when it be ginneth to rent them, and to make factions in Corinth, it is not to be forborn, but to be reproved. And in the former difference of meats, the Apostle condemneth alwayes the offence and Schlim that followed on it, although he did not peremptorily decide any thing as to mens practices, or censure for the opinion it self: thus one might think the first day of the week not to be fure Divino, and this might possible be forborn. But if he were preffing the change of it, and refufing to observe it, or venting it to offend others that were incolerable; thus the difference and errours concorning Church-government by Bishops, and in the Congregational way, may, we conceive, in themselves be forborn in persons where they are not vented to the shaking and drawing away of others; but if pressed in practice, to the renting of a Church, and preferred or equalled to the true Government that is established by the Word, in that case they are not to be forborn, because then truth is to be vindicated. and obstructions to edification in the renting or distracting of a Church to be removed, and at on time more than at another, as such an offence doth waken a Schism, and diffurb order and Union in one Church or at one time more than another: hence we see, Acts 15. fomethings are put in that decree in reference to that time, only for preventing of Schism and Scandal. while the doctrine of the abolition of the ceremonial Law was not fo clear; And fomethings were forborn amongst the Gentiles, which were not so amongst the Jews for a time, as circumcifion and all theceremonies of the Law, which yet for a time the lews observed; aud experience and reason make the thing clear, according to that Paul, To the Jews 1 became as a few, and I became all things to all men &c. which is not to flow his counterfeiting, or his dallying in any necessary thing, but the squaring of his practice in lawfull things according to the feveral cases of these he had to do with, which will be applicable both to persons and Churches.

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A. We would diffinguish betwirt things, and perfons . Sometimes it will be meet to centure a fault or errour in perions, as Paul doth in the Corinthians and Galatians, and yet it not be fit to confure the perfons: he doth indeed threaten thefe, but doth forhear, leaft thereby he should have hurr moe by a subsequent and following rent, than by his stronk he had cured. So also are persons to be diffinguished, some whereof only erre, but others teach others fo ; and in that respect are Hereticks and Schismaticks: which, had that beentheir own opinion only, could not have been imputed to them; these last eannot plead that forbearance that ought to be had towards the former, Alfo distinction is to be made in the manner of forbearance; it is one thing to forbear fimply and altorether one that is infected witherrour and foreadeth it.it is another thing to forbear . in some respect, to wie, of centure only, or it may be in respect of degree formething may be more gently cenfured, and yet not altogether forborn; and one may Ministerially reprove a fault and person by the key of Doctrine, in applying of it, when yee he may forbear the exercise of Discipline and Censure , as in the forceited place, Paul is reproving falle teachers in Corath, verfoaring the rod for a time; and fo; withing that fome were cut of in Galatia, yet not doing it; and this is not fo much respect to the persons of these teachers, as to the Church and to the multitude of their followers. whom hafty Centures might rather have flumbled than edified, which is the great end of that and of all other Ordinances: Therefore feeketh he first to recover them, and again, to bring them back to the acknowledgement of his authority, and thereupon to exercise the weapons that he had in readineste for the avenging all disobedience, when their obedience is made manifest, 2 Cor. 10.6. which he would not do before that, left they (being addicted to these reachers) had fided with them against his authority, and fo it had been both more huntful to them and to the Church than edifying, by which alone he is swayed. Thele

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These and other such considerations being had, Minifters by christian prudence, are to gather when to be filent, and when to fpeak, when to Genfure, and when to forbear; but by all means, are ever to be watchfull, left the grounds that plead for forbestance fometimes for the Churches edification upon the one fide. be not ftretched out fo broad, as to foster our lukewarm temper, coldnesse, and fainting cowardlihesse in the things of God; and there is much need to try from what that moderation doth flow, and whether even then the heart be hot with holy indignation against these; Even as one the other side, true zeal would be guided towards the scope of edification. lest that duty of exercising Discipline, which is acceptable to God, and useful to the Church, be rejected of him, because proceeding from our own spirits, and prove more hurtful than edifying in the cffects thereof; Some few inflances whereof have given some occasion of speaking evil of this Ordinance of Jesus Christ, to these who at all three ly in wait, to catch at what may be wrested to the represent thereof. But to conclude this, without infifting on particulars, there must be a single, impartial and prudential walking, fo as may attain edification, and as men may be answerable to Josus Christ in their truft, having an eye to these things that most contribute to edification.

But 1. If what is vented be blasphomeus, and defiroyeth the foundations of faith, that comes not within this debate as in Paul's dealing with Hymenius and Alexander, 1. Tim. 1.20, is clear; for zeal for the Majefly of God, and love to the falvation of louis (which is the substance of the two great commandements of the Law) will admit of no forbearing in such a case. 2. If it corrupteth or defaceth the Church, and maketh her a reproach to the profane, it is not to be forborn. 3. If the things become not the Ordinances of Christ, but reflect on them, and consequently on Him whose Ordinances they are, they are not to be connived at. 4. If such things hazard the publick

Somethings not at all to be forborn.

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beauty, order and government of the Church, withour which there is no keeping up the face of 'a vifible Church, these are not to be over-looked! 5. If they mar the union and love that ought to be in the Church (which is to be preferred , and every thing that may mar it, removed) they ought not to be tolerated. 6. If they turn to be offenfive and feandal. lous, either by making the wayes of the Lord to be ill spoken of, 2 Pet. 2. 2. or by grieving the godly, or by infecting others; they are not the object of forbearance, except some circumstance concur, as hath been faid, in which case it cannot properly be called forbearance: By these and other things, this may be tried, when an errour is to be forborn and when not. in which, confideration is to be had, both of the nature of the errour, and of the person that doth hold it, as also of the case of the Church and people, who may be edified or hurt by the forbearing or Cenfuring of such a person.

What is needfull, but not sufficient, will appear when we come to confider what is called-for; for, what is leffe than what is required, must be desective and not sufficient: as it is requisite that men not only keep themselves free, but also that by admonition and exhortation, means be used to reclaim these that have fallen; vet these are not sufficient if there be no publick mean, yea, though there were publick authoritative preaching, and exercifing of the key of Doctrine, yet that is not sufficient, if there be not also censuring by discipline, and an exercise of the key of Jurisdiffion; and in some cases every censure will not be sufficient, if it be not extended to the utmost, for Christ hath not given that key for nought to His Church, in reference to all her scandals, nor are men exonered till they reach themselves to the uttermost in their sta-

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tions y but this will appear more afterward.

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CHAP. IX.

what is called-for from Church-officers in the case of foreading errous.

E begin pow to speak particularly to the Church-officers duty, and what is called for from them, especially from Ministers, which we may confider in a fourfold respect. 1. There is somethings called for from the Minister in reference to God. 2. In reference to himself. 2. In reference to the Flock and people who are not tainted, but, it may be, under the tentation. 4. In reference to these that are in the inare, especially the promotters of these evils.

The first two are interwoven almost, Therefore

we shall speak of them together: and we say,

I. When such a tentation setteth on upon a people, and beginneth to infect or hazard the infection of a particular Flock, or of many together, for, the hazard of one, is the hazard of many in such a case, as is ference (aid) the Minister would look first to God as the great over-ruler, even of these things that are evil in the Churches; and he would confider if things be in such a time. good case betwixt God and him, especially in respect of his Ministery; for, such an infection in a Flock is a prime stroak upon a Minister, because the spreading thereof threatneth the unchurching of that Church. and blafting of his Ministery, as , Rev. 2. is threatned against the Angel of Ephesus, and it never cometh but it hath with it a spirit and spair of bitternesse against. and many croffes, faintings and vexations unto, the Minister; he is therefore soberly and composedly to look to God as his party, and is not to think, that such things come by guesse, and spring out of the dust, nor from the corruptions of some giddie people only, but that there is a higher hand; without this there can be no right use made of such a dispensation; and this is it that should humble the Minister and make him ferious, left by the peoples fin, God may be fmiting

what a Ministeris calledto in re-God and himfelf, at

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him:

him: Paul hath this word when he speaketh of the Schisms and contentious debates that were in Corinth, 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21, Ifear, faith he, left when I come, my God will humble me amongst you, he did so conftruct of their milcarrying, as making for his humiliation: yet it is to be adverted, that it is nor the Minister or Flock that the Lord is most displeased with, that alwayes is io affaulted and shaken, although it be ever

matter of humiliation. 2. When the Minister is composed to take up Gods hand in the matter, then is he not only to look to Him for direction and guiding in his duty, and without fresting to reverence His dispensation; but he is to reflect upon himself, and to confider his bygone carriage, especially in his Ministery, if he may not be chargeable before God with some sinful influence upon his peoples diftempers and miscarriages. particularly, he is to look to these four, I. If he be in good terms with God, in reference to his own particular state and condition, and if there was that due tendernesse and watchfulnesse at the time of the outbreaking of fuch an ill: I grant, it may be that things were right, as in the case of fob, fob 3. 26. yet it becometh him to try; for, such a thing may be trysted with fecurity and negligence, that thereby he may be awakned to fee his former defects. 2. A Minister would then reflect on his clearnesse to that calling, and particularly to fuch a charge; and shough to both he may be called by God, yet it is his part to try, that he may meet the reproaches with the greater confidence; as we see Paul doth in the Epifiles often mentioned; for, in such a case a Minister will be put to it, and who knoweth but possibly expectation of ease, quiet accommodation or credit in such a place, and tractablenesse in such a people, and such like, might have had weight with a good man to fway him to one place more than another? and by such a dispenfation the Lord doth chaften that, to learn Ministers at their entry to be swayed alone with the Churches But, 3. to come nearer, a Minister edification. would

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would try if he hath any finfull meritorions influence (to speak to) in procuring that stroak to the people. to be given up to these delusions; for, it is certain, a Minister may be smitten in some stroak of this kind upon his people, as is clear from that threatning to the Angel of Ephesus, Rev. 2. even as a Magistrate may be smitten by a stroak that is immediatly upon his people, as we fee in Davids case, who thus procured the Pestilence, 2Sam. 24. because, first, the people themselves are not guiltless, to that there is no injustice. And, 2. Because there is a great fibnesse betwixt Minifter and people, so that a rod upon one, doth indeed preve a rod to both . he would therefore try if poffibly he hath been somewhar proud or vain of his authoriry, or respect amongst them, of their knowledge, orderly carriage, or dependance on the Ordinances. especially if he have any way affected such a thing. and hath withall fleighted the trying of their spiritual effare and bettering of it, or if he hath been neglective to pray for them, and for their flability in the truth; if he hath been defective to warn or to keep up the authority of the Ordinances, and of a Ministery among them; if he hath been too familiar and trivial in his carriage with them, and such like; also, if he hath been affected with zeal for Gods honour, when other Congregations have been infected, if he hath fympathized with such Ministers, and born burthen with others in such cases; or, if on the contrary, he hath been carelesse, or, it may be, pusted up because himself was free: these and such like fins would be searched. because their is a Justice, and, if I may say, a congruity in Justice, in punishing such fins with such a rod; for its often when the husband men are fleeping that the enemy doth fow fuch tares. 4. He would try if he hath had any finfull influence on fuch evils. as if he hath not been full and diligent in grounding them in the fundamental truths, and clearing to them the Doctrines of the Gospel, as well as preaching duties, cases, and such like, or if he hath needlesly forftered curiofity in flarting any questions, or in gi-VIDE

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ving people way to follow them, if he hath made a sport of some errours publickly or privately, if he hath laughen at, or lightly spoken of, the errouts and miscarriages of others, before them, if he hath not been faithfull to admonish and reprove the first gadings, or if he hath fed the people with empty notions and wind, and builded hay and stubble upon the foundation, and hath not feriously discovered to them their guiltinesse, and hath not put them to the exercise of Repentance for their corrupt inclinations, thereby to presse humility, fear, watchfulnesse, diligence, &c. that fo their hand might be filled with a more folid work and Christ by them imployed to preserve them, even from this tentation. These, I say, and such like, would be tryed, because where they are, the Minister wants not accession to their fin, as if in some respect he had combined with these seducers.

3. When this is done, the Minister would be affected with his own guilt, and then his sympathy with the peoples condition will be the more lively; and he would, first, endeavour the recovery of himself, and his reftoring to good tearms with God through Christ Jesus. 2. As he would confesse his own faults, so also the faults of the people; and as he would pray for pardon for himself, so would he do for them, who, it may be, do reproach and curse him, yet would he not ceale to pray for them, having that word fresh under fuch a stroak, As for these sheep, Lord, what have 3. There would be special dealing with God, and dependence on Him for fitnesse rightly to manage such a case; for, the charge becomes more heavie; God therefore should be acknowledged for obtaining suitable furniture, even in reference to that particular: And Ministers would know, that it is not their abilities, gifts, nor parts that can do this; and if we cannot speak profitably to one that is not in fach a diffemper, what can we do where the person is so prejudged and distempered, if the Lord do it not? Ministers therefore would be in reference to every word, unto fucli persons, in a holy fear and jealousie,

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left, lippening to themselves, they may the Master's work, and stumble a poor soul rather than edific the same.

4. He would aim seriously not only at experience, but at edification; and for that cause would begin, by dealing with God, for successe, and that either the Lord would immediatly Himself convince or blesse His surniture to him for that end; yea, He would be blyth if any mean were provided and blesses.

fed, though in another hand than his own,

4. The Minister would now use ordinary means for fitting of himself to discover such errours as his people are guilty of, that he may be able folidly to convince them that are flumbled, and to establish others that fland; and pains would be taken in this, aswell as for preaching, or in the studying of common heads at the passing of tryals, which is but a proof of the man's gifts in a more remote reference to fuch a case, which now is specially to be put in exercife; Therefore he would, first, endeavour to be through in the whole body of Divinity and grounds of Christian Religion; for, there is such a connexion. amongst truths, that when one is wronged, many are wronged, and one errour may overturn many foundations: And if a Minister have not some generall impression of the whole, he cannot with confidence fearch in, or undertake the refutation of any one particular errour: Neither ought a Minister, who poffibly for a time hath forborn studies of that kind, think it unbecoming him again to realirn to them. feing it is duty, and there is no frame to be learning what may fit one for his duty; And who knoweth but among other ends, this may be intended, that Minifters may be put to more confrant fludy and fearch in the fundamental truths of the Gospel? 2. He would then, like a wife Physician endeavour to know the malady that hath infected and diffempered his people, what are the errours they maintain, what are the arguments that have weight with them, what are the tentations they have had, or who are the tempters or instruments that have seduced them, and

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such like; What also is their natural humour, hafty or meck, proud or humble; What hath been their former way of walking, what are their parts and abilities, with whom they converse, who hath weight with them, or are effectmed by them, that by these and fuch like means he may be in better capacity to know how to apply the remedie, and to deal with them himself, or to make use of others for that end. He would endeavour the furnishing of himself. 3. especially in reference to these errours beyond others which they are tainted with, and for this cause would provide fit Books, converse with others that are able to help him, and gather his own observations from Scripture and other grounds, that through Gods blefting upon his labours he may be able to speak of thefe things confidently as to himfelf, and convincingly as to others. It is to be observed, that the former order laid down, doth nor require a succession in time, in reference to the feveral steps (for, in some cases a Minister will be instantly put to what is beyoud all these, and to deal by some other means,) but it sheweth the order of nature, and what way is to be followed according as there is accelle and opportunity.

Union amongst Ministers and theirstocks, is in such a casecarefully to be studied.

Further, It is necessary for Ministers, an such a timeespecially to endeavour mien amongst themselves and amongst the people of their flocks; for, othertimes division and delusion are trysted together, whereby the deluders are exceedingly firengthened, Truth, and the Ministers thereof, made exceedingly contemptible and put in an incapacity to edifie, or have weight, till that be removed. Therefore we fee, that in the Churches of Corinth, Galatia and Philippi, where Seducers were driving their designs, and divifion had taken great footing, the Apostle hach a special regard to the recovering of their union at fuch a time: We may read it also in the Life of Basilius the great Antagonist of the Arions, who, being by some division with Eusebius, then Bishop of Cesarie, necesfitated to withdraw for the Churches peace, Where-

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upon Valence the Arian Emperour, and other Arians, thought that a fit opprunity to vent their errour in cefaria, which they could not fuccessfully do, while union continued there. To disappoint this delign, Gregory Nazianzen advised his return and uniting with Bufebius, as the only mean to prevent the growth of that herefie amongst the people, which being accordingly done, and both of them forgetting their particular discontents for the the publick good, the Church was so established, and the errour so opposed, that the forenamed enterprifers were confirained to

give over their delign upon that union.

In the third place, we come to confider a Minifters duty in reference to the flock in general (and certainly by proportion it may be gathered what feriouineffe, gravity and diligence ought to be amongft Ruling-elders in their concurring with him in such a case, who are also to joyn with him according to their places in the former fearch and triall of their carriage, and in fitting of themselves for being usefull in such a vime) for, it cannot be denied, but somewhat peculiar is called for from the Minister, in reference to his Ministery in common amongst the people, more than is called for at another time. As, 1. he is to be in respect of all Christian qualifications in his carriage and all ministerial duries in his charge, fingularly ferious and eminently exemplary, because it is now a main and prime thing to have a testimony of fincerity, faithfulnesse and love to the proples edification in their own consciences; and this cannot be obtained at fuchra time without the former. For, in experience we see that declining to errour, and falling from effects of the Minister, go together: and where this is preserved, either the fall. is prevented, or there is the greater accesse to recover the person that is sallen. Ministers therefore would especially fludy that, as a main mean of the peoples edification. And for that eaufe, would observe, 1. If any thing hath escaped them in their way, which might have given offence, and would by all means endeavour

what is his duty in reference to his flock.

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endeavour to remove it. 2. If any thing hath been unjufly impured to them, they would condescend no clear it. 2. They would take notice of what particulars they use to be charged with, though, it may be, uninfly, or what usually Ministers are charged with by the corrupt men of the world, as pride, covetouinefie, felf-feeking, hypocrific and the like; and at such a time, Ministers would not only eschew these evils, but also the very appearance of them which is a part of Paul's becoming all things to all, that he might gain and fave some, I cor. 9. And, in a word, a Minister would so carry in that time, as every look, word, action, gesture, yea, as every thing leffe or more in his Ministery, in his family, diet, cloaths, and fuch like, may abide the triall of the most narrow and watchfull observers, yea, of one that is a more high and narrow observer than they.

2. There are some things wherein particularly he would infift and feek to have born in upon the As, I. to have them fenfible of the evil of errour, and of the hazard that cometh by it, also of the devils subtilty and craft in carrying on of such a bufinesse: 2. To have them instructed and cleared in the truths of the Gospel, especially in such things as are controverted, that the errours and consequents following thereon, may be made as obvioufly clear and hatefull as may be. 3. This would be done fo as they be not diverted from practice in the main duties of godlinesse by any speculation; but, searching, up-stirring and materiall Doctrines, with powerfull and convincing applications of all kinds, would be in a speciall manner pressed then, as we see in these directions to Timothy and Titus is clear: where, upon the one fide, the taking head to fables and vain janglings is dehorted from, and convincing, exhorting, reproving with all authority, pressing of good works, and exercifing to godlinesse, are, on the otherfide exhorted unto. 4. People would be pressed by all means, to eschew snares and the company of seducers, which was both our Lords practice, and the practice

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practice of His Apostles. There is no duty more frequently pressed than that: It is true, this is sometimes mistaken by people, yet it is the duty of Minifters to presse it; yea, they are charged to charge others in reference to this, as in the 1. to Tim.4. 11. and 6. 13. being compared with the directions that are given 5. It may be it were not unmeet in these Epistles. in such a time, that something were done in writ, for clearing of these things which are especially controverted, and that some in particular might be defigned for this part of the work: for, often seducers spread their errours by writ, as we may fee in Jer. 29. 25. And sometimes there will be accesse to instruct and edifie by writ, when it cannot be done by word, yea, fo, some persons may have objections moved and answered to them, before they be confirmed in such and fuch opinions, which possibly they would have thought shame to move till they had settled in them; and so have been in a greater prejudice against the truth, and in a greater incapacity to be gained from them; and we see, that the Apostles used this way unto Churches and People, to confute materiall errours in writ, and so also to confirm the truth against all cavils of adversaries, even as they did it by word of mouth and preaching.

3. In all this, the Minister would take good heed to his manner of proceeding, that it be grave, weighty, ferious, loving, and in every thing such as may convince the people, 1. Of his own seriousnesse, and being much affected with such a businesse, Therefore light and mocking expressions would be shunned , but the Minister would be affectionate and ferious, like one travelling in birth, while Christ be formed in them again, as Paul speaketh, Gal. 4. 19. 2. To convince them of the evil of the thing, and for that cause would so carry, as he may make errour also hateful and loathsome to the people, as any scandalous practice whatsoever; for which cause Ministers would rather endeavour to stir the peoples zeal against such evils, by grave, convincing, affectionate

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ctionate expressions. regrates or expostulations, than to move their laughter with trivial mocks or taunts, in reference to such principles or persons; for, (as holy Master Greenham used to say) that doth but make fin ridiculous, when it ought to be made hateful. 3. He would endeavour to convince them of his finglenesse in seeking of their good, and of love to them, and pirty to these that are misled; for which cause any thing that may make him be supposed to refent personal reproaches or indignities, or aim at upholding of his own credit, or to vent bitternesse against the persons of others, would be carefully abstained from: for, these things derogate much from the weight of what a Minister can do; and we see the great Apostle Paul, doth not stick to condescend in fuch cases to vindicate himself from such mistakes, and to use great expressions of love, yea, sometimes to artest God as to the fincerity of his professions, and fuch like, which are frequent in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, which may be an example 4. Their whole carriage to Ministers in such cases. would be affectionateseven to the persons of opposers; for, nothing prejudgeth more, than for a Minister to be thought carnal and passionate, whereas tender dealing and usage to persons and to their outward estates, doth prove as coals of fire to soften them, as in experience is found; however its becoming of a Minister; yet it is to be done without marring zeal and indignation against their errours, and without prejudice to his feeking to censure them for these or his restraining them from venting of the same.

It is here to be adverted, I. That what was spoken of the manner of a Ministers carriage in reference to practical scandals, and of his duty in a time when offences abound, is also to be remembred here and in what followeth. 2. That what is spoken of Ministers duty, will by proportion agree to Ruling-Elders according to their stations; for, they should no lesse endeavour the preventing and suppressing of corrupt doctrine than of other scandalous practices, and they

especially

Part 2. especially are to endeavour to have the means used by the Minister, made weighty amongst the people; and for that end, are to endeavour to have himlest weighty also.

We come now to the fourth step of a Ministers what is a duty, and that is, as it relateth to those that are taint- Minister's ed with errour, (we mean groffe errours and delufi- duty in refeons, such as this discourse runneth upon)We may cons rencetothose fider it in these four fleps, as it relateth, 1. to differery, that are feor tryal, 2: to conviction, 3. to admonition, 4. to duced.

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For the first, as the Apostle saith of men in general, 1. Tim. 5. 24. Some mens fins are open before hand. going before to judgement, and some mens follow after: So here, sometimes errour discoverethit self, and there is no need of fearch; yet fometimes also there will be many fecret objections moved and harboured against truths, which will not be avowed, though they be privately muttered; yea, sometimes corrupt teachers will endeavour the vailing and hiding of their tenets, or errours, by many thifts, even when they are fludying to leaven others with their delufions. There is therefore a necessity in such a case, try what opinions are held and vented, and to discover the absurdnesse and groffenesse of them; for, many will maintain the premiffes ignorantly, who will not know that such absurd conclusions do follow thereupon; It is fit therefore to lay by the names and expressions used by seducers, and to expresse the thing as it is, especially if it be the reviving of some old abfurdity under some new coat and pretext; Thus the Lord doth discover the abomination of the Nicolaitans doctrine, by comparing it unto, and evidencing it to be, upon the matter, indeed one and the same with the practices of Baland and Jezebel, Rev. 2.14,15, and 20. This way is also followed by Peter, 2 Epiff. 2. and by Jude, who compared corrupt teacheres to Balaam, Korab, Dathan, &c. thereby to take the viforn off old newly revived errours, that they may appear as they are; for, often errour is COIR-

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commended to people under some new representation, and many will love it so represented, who yet will abhore former errours, which are ftill the same, though under another name, which are two tricks of the devils subtility, 1. To make old errour passe under the opnion and construction of some new light. And 2. for that end to disguise it in some circumstances, and to change its name : and indeed, it is no little piece of spiritual dexterity to remove that mask. Seconly, There is a discovery to be made of the persons who hanker after such opinions, that it may be found who are infected thereby: This would be done to reclaim the persons, and to cure that distemper, before it break out or come to a height; for, it is more easie often to cure one at the beginning than afterward: also, when it becometh publick, it hath with it some kind of engagement on the person, and he is more hardly recovered, left he should feem thereby to appear weak, erronious, unstable, or such Befide, it is more gaining-like when the Minister privately findeth them out, and endeavoureth to recover them secretly, before any publick notice be taken thereof, and often hath more successe with it, than after debates, as seemeth to be held forth in that place, Gal. 2. 2. where Paul faith, that he communicated with them of reputation, the Gospel, first, privately, left by any means he should have run in vain. Therefore we conceive, persons suspect of errour, would not haftily be brought to publick, but in some respect, the publicknesse of their offence, would be, as it were, diffembled, or not positively fo publickly taken notice of; that thereby there may be the fairer accesse for them to retreat. 2. If there be any retreat, the person would be waited upon, although at first it be not fully satisfying, and all due eare and diligence would be used to have his former errour buried, as if it had never been, without any publick hearing, except some extraordinary circumflance perswade to another way, For, (besides the reasons given errour becometh not readily a publick feanda!

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scandal, except there be tenaciousnesse therein, or some actual stumbling-block laid before others thereby which often the persons reclaiming, will remove more then their centuring. Therefore,upon supposition of a persons recovery, there is no great fear of hazard in abitaining from bringing such a thing to publick, except he hath been inftrumental to feduce others or in some such case which doth make his carriage openbefore hand, as is faid. 4. This fecret difcovery before things break out, is needful to prevent the defection of others, because, if the persons be not reclaimed, they may be found out to be dangerous, and may so be noted, for the preventing of their being a fnare to others, which they might have been more easily, had they not been marked to be such, which is the reason of that exhortation, Rom. 16.17. Mark them that cause divisions, and avoide them. When a person is discovered and found to be tainted, then all means are to be used for his conviction by conference, reasoning and other such means as may gain the end, this is a special qualification of a Minister, Tit. 1. 9. that he may be able by found Doftrine to convince gainfayers. And (as it is, 2 Tim.2.25.) in meeknesse to instruct these that oppose themselves: Which step may be considered under diverse respects. 1. As it tendeth to the gaining of the person directly, so especially private debatings are requisite, which are to be carried on with all meeknesse and long suffering. although they meet with reproaches and reflections. in the profecuting thereof. 2. Although there be little hopes of gaining the person-yet there is need of such means for the stoping of his mouth, and the edification of others, that thereby he have not occasion to leduce them; for, often such debatings folidly and judicially carried on, though they do not convince the person, so as to make him filent, yet do they convince others of the absurdnesse of these errours, and the unreasonablenesse of such a persons cart riage; and experience hath-proven that often such debates hath been bleffed for the credit &vindication

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of the tensh in reference to many others, and by that place, Tet. 1: 9. feemeth in be clear duty, though there be little hopes of coming speed, as to the perfons feduced.

CHAP. X.

Whither at all times a publick debate be necessary with Juch perfons upha thefe points.

Fit be questioned here, r. Whether in all cales there be a necessity of a publick debate? a. What is to be accounted conviction? a. What is to be done, when the persons are not filent? A. How this debate is to be managed?

We shall answer by laying down some Assertions promiferoully in reference to all these Questions.

Affine. 1. We lay that there are sometimes and cales it is cafes wherein publick debates are not altogether to be called for, flunded; I will not fay, that every person is to accept of fuch a challenge, left thereby truth be wronged; (neither is it alwayes the ablest man that manageth fuch a businesse best) but in general the thing is necessary in these and such like bales : As, 1. when erroufs feem to be new among the people. 2. When the promotters of them become infolent, as if they durft come to the light with their doeds. 3. When by forbearance and filence, people are in hazard to think fomething of these insolent boasters, and of their opinions, in which cases, Ifay, and the like there is some necessity of this, for the Churches edification, asinay appear from Tit. 1.9, 10, 11. There are many, faith the Apostle, who are unruly and vain talkers fuch as vainly boaft of their own ability, to maintain their opinions) whose mouths must be stopped, lest they get advantage to seduce others; and this is given as the resson why Ministers should be qualified with abilities to convince gainfayers, because sometimes the in folencie and vanity of fome fuch, doth necessitate to this! and on this ground we will find our bleffed

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Lord Himfelf and Stephen and Paul frequently diffuting even in Affemblies and Synagonucs. This will nor infer a necessity for every Minister to dispute at all thmes, even in such a case but sometimes it may be referr'd, and put to others; for if crush be maintained and errour be confuted, it may flop the gainley-

ers mouth, although every one do it not.

Affentia. Yet there are some cases, when such entering of debates is not necessary nor expedient. As, case it is not I. supposing these things not to be new, but to have called for. been sufficiently consuted formerly, and it may be in other places not far off, nor long before that; for, if there should be a continuing still to debace, there would be no truth acknowledged to be fettled, nor accelle to other and further dunes. 2. When tome persons are known vainly and purposty to feek to put ell to confusion, by multiplying such debutes, and irreverently so profesure the fame, as if they made it their trade or vocation to do fo: The answering of fuch men according to their folly, would be an accession to their guilt of taking the bleffed Name of God in win, and for farisfaction to mens humors, and not for the great end of edification. 3. When men become unreasonable, and in their debatings, shew irrational contradiction and blasphemy; in such a cale, it is to be forborn or broken off with indigention, and with zeal to the glory of God, as we fee Paul and Barnabas do, Act. 12.45, 46. 4. Some erroncous persons are so grosse and absurd, that they are not to be disputed with but rather to be reproved and abhorred: and therefore we see in these Epistles. Rev. 2. 2. there is no disputing against the Nicotaituns, as Paul usern in other cases, because, where fuch abfundities are owned, there is no accesse to fasten a conviction from reason, when men by such opinions appear no be unreasonable. 5. When men deny prinsiples, as the authority or fofficiency of the Scripture, or when they lay new principles, as a light within, revelocions, enchufialms, or fuch like: or when they grofly and abfurdly wrest and pervert the Seripture,

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as Peter speaketh of some, denying most clear senses. and forging fenfes which are most ridiculous : In fuch cases, there is no accesse to dispute, not only because it cannot be done without admitting of them to blaspheme, but also because there is no mean by which they may be convinced, seing the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is rendred uselesse unto them : As for instance , Hymeneus and Alexander, faid, there was no refurrection to come, because it was past already; they wanted no dexterity to abuse the Scripture, which saith, that there is a refurrection from fin, and by the new birth Believers are raised from the dead. Now, the applying of what is spoken of the general and second resurrection to this particular and first resurrection, is so grosse, that Paul doth not dispute with but Sentence such blasphemers and abusers of the Scripture; for, it is clear, that they did not deny the Scripture, or a resurredion fimply, but did grofly and irrationally misapply the same: of this fort, are such as will admit of no distinctions, nor consequences, nor different acceptations of words and phrases, and such like: for according to these grounds, the Scripture is made to disagree from it self, to give no certain sound in any thing, and to infer many absurdities, which is blasphemous to think.

What is to be accounted as the Sufficient conviction of a gain-Sayer.

Affert. 2: It is not to be thought that that only is conviction, which putteth the adverse party to filence, or that when convincing of gainfayers is commanded, that that only is intended: for, men of corrupt unruly spirits (as the Apostle faith) wax worse and worse, and do refift the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withfood Mofes, 2Tim. 2.8. and are therefore called reprobate concerning the faith; yea, sometimes the more they be pinched and bound, the more they cry out, and will not yeeld to convincing truth, as we fee, Act. 6.9, 10, 11. and Act. 13.45,46. and certainly there were none of Paul's opposers able to dispute with him, yet we will never almost find his adversaries silent, put them to filence, and did actually convince them notwithA STANDARD BOOK STRANGE OF

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notwithstanding they are still muttering and contradicting, fo that oftentimes he breaketh off, fhaking the dust off his feet against them, when arguments did not the bufinesse. Oftentimes also, this continuing of contradiction with some dexterity to pervert Scripture to their own destruction, is to them penal and judicial, as was formerly observed, and doth follow upon their hazarding and daring to oppose the manifest truth. And who would have thought, but that these Magicians that resisted Moses should have been convinced by to many miracles, not to have effayed further to oppose him? which yet notwithstanding they continue to do; and if it was so then, and with Paul and the other Apostles afterward, can it be expected to be otherwayes now? feing the spirit of Fannes and Fambres, and the gainsaying of Core is

marked by the Scripture to wait on fuch.

If it be asked then, What can be underfrood by conviction? and if a person may be accounted convinced, who yet may be keeping the last word, and confidently bragging of the victory? Anim- That conviction is not to be bounded with acknowledgement or filence in the party convinced, we suppose is already cleared: yea, those that are convinced, may, as it were, cry the others out of the company by multitude of words and confidence of expressions, as those Tews did cry down Paul and Barnabas, Act. 12.46. Therefore we see in that precept, Tit. 2. 10, 11. that the Heretick which is to be rejected, is both faid to refuse admonition; and also to be condemned of himself; yet it cannot be said that he was put to silence by these admonitions, or did forbear to vent his errours: this therefore must be accounted certain, and is confirmed by 2 Tim. 2. 25. where the recovery of opposers, even after sufficient instruction, with meeknelle, hath a peradventure in it, as a thing most rarely to be found. We must therefore place conviction in some other thing than that: and so in answer to the question, What is to be accounted conviction? We lay, I. it is when a person is so far convinced, and the

Part 2

she sruth with his errour to far cleared to be truth and errour respectively, that his continuing obstinate. eannot be supposed to be of infirmity, which often will evidence it felf in foolish, weightlesse and unreasonable shifts and answers, or when there cannot be weight in fuch an answer, to fatisfie a mans own reason or conscience if he were sober and at himself: upon this account the Heretick is faid to be condemned of himfelf, Tit. 2. 11. not because actually his conscience doth condemn him for diffimulation a for oven then it is supposed he may be in a delusion. which keepeth off fich challenges; and their confeiences are faid to be feared with an hot iron, 17im. 4.2. which importeth, they were not capable of politive convictions within themselves; but it must be understood thus, that they are the cause of their own blindnesse, as wilfully and maliciously refusing and rejecting light when it is offered to them and so the cause of their own damnation doth not flow from the neglect of others, in not holding forth to them fufficient light, but from their own obstinacy, prejudice and malicioniness. 2. They may be faid to be convinced when the thing is made clear to fober ferious men, even as some stupide ignorant persons are inexcufable in their ignorance, when they live under such means as others of ordinary capacity thrive by; althogh such plain preachings, discourses or doctrines be no way understood by them; yet may it justly be faid, that that light was sufficient to infernet them, or that Gospel to convince them, soing others have been profised by the fame. 2. They may be faid to be convinced, even when they speak again; when there is no answer to purpose in their speaking, but ablurd deriving or afferting of things without any reafon, or when there is a granting of abfurd confequences or an afferring of one abfurdity, that possibly is greater nor another which they would eichew, or, bitter railing against mens persons, seeking to defame them for Arengthening of their cause, as the false teachers didPaul among the Corinthians and Galatians

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and as the Libertins did to Stephen by venting calumnies on him, and provoking others against him, Atts 6. or, when in their answers or debates, they break out in blasphemy against God, against His Scriptures, against His Ordinances; such, in such cases, are to be accounted fufficiently convinced, and their obstinacy is to be accounted malicious; and this we may gather, as from other places, fo from that, Act. 2. 40, 16. when they come to wilful contradictions and blaspheming, Paul and Barnabas will reason no more. And Att. 28. 24, 25, some lews are accounted to be sufficiently convinced, and their contradiction to proceed from judicial blinding, when they reject that word which did sufficiently convince others. Also, we see, Ad, 17.22. when men begin to mack at the fundamental things of Religion, or to thit clear places of Scripture, by putting strange and absurd expositions upon them, as was formerly marked of Hrmeneus and Alexander ; fuch persons are not to be difputed with any more, but to be accounted abundantly convinced, Notwithstanding of the most confident contradiction; and what was faid of fome cales, wherein publick debate was not to be admitted, the fame may be applied in this case, as being evidences of sufficient conviction and self-condemnation of fuch persons.

Affire. 4. When any such debate is found necessa- How a pubry, there is much spiritual zeal and prudence required lich debate in the managing thereof: in which, befide what is ge- is to be manerally required in the manner of every thing, chefe naged when things are to be observed, 1. That it be not tumul' necessary. tuary and confused, because so the Name of God is irreverently dealt with, and made obsoxious to reproach. Therefore order and reverence and what is needful and fir for fuch an endris to be provided for; otherswife shelt confused meetings are to be left when entred into, as diffeonourable to the Name of God. and unbecoming the gravity that Ministers should follow, as we fee Aff. 13.45, 46 and Aff. 19.20 20 for, in such a case there is no accesse to edification.2. Men

would

Part 3

would deniedly undertake such a thing when called to it, as being convinced how difficult the task is, how feetlesse they themselves are, and how subtile the principal adversary which they have to do with Therefore there would not be an undertaking upon the account of gifts, parts, or learning, nor would it be managed only or mainly by fubtile arguments, nor would advantage be much fought for, that way, but fimple truth would be plainly, gravely, and zealously proposed, with respect to the affecting the conscience of the party, and of the hearers. And as it is in preaching not the subtilest and learnedest discourses do alwayes prove most taking, So in debates that concern conscience, material plainnesse demonstrating the truth with power unto the conscience hath often the clearest evidence with it. There is a notable infrance roorded by Ruffinus, Ecclef. hift. lib. 10. chap. 2. which was thus, at the Council of Nice, great Schollers were conveened from all places, upon report of that famous meeting, to which alfo did come some chief Philosophers, of whom one most eminent did dispute frequently with the greatest Schollers, who were never able to bind him, because such (saith he) was his nimblenesse, that like an eel he flipped them, by one shift or other, when arguments did teem most constringent. God, that he might show that Hiskingdom did not confise in word, but in power; one of the Confessors, being a man of a most simple nature, and knowing nothing but Christ Jesus and him crucified, when he saw the Philosopher insulting and boasting of his quicknesse, desired liberty to speak with him a little. others did shun it knowing the mans simplicity, and fearing left he should become a reproach to subtile men; notwithstanding he persisted, and began thus, Philopher, in the Name of Jesus Christ hear these things that are true, There is one Godwho made Heaven and Earth, and formed man out of the dust, and gave him a Spirit, who made all things which are feen and unfeen, who fent His Son, born of a

Virgin, to deliver us miserable somers from everlasting death, by His suffering of death; and bath given us life eternal by His Refurredion, whom We expect to come as Judge of what ever we do: Philosopher, believest thou these things? Then he, as if he had not known how to contradict, aftonished with the power of what was faid, and put to filence, only could anfwer, that it appeared fo, that there was no other thing but truth in what be had faid. Then faid the aged Confestor, if thou believest so, rise and follow me to the Church, and receive the feat of this faith: Then the Philosopher turning to thefe that were with him, and other hearers, faid, Hear, O Learned men, while the matter was managed with me with words, I opposed words to words: but when for words vertue proceeded out of the mouth of him that spake, words (said he) could not refift power, nor man God. And therefore, if any of you have felt what I have, let him believe in Christ, and follow this old man, in whom God hath spoken. Thus far Ruffinus: a story not unworthy to be observed. 3. It would be known what principles may be laid down. or what rules may be binding otherwayes there may be an afferting of any thing, or denying of everything. 4. There would be ftill a ministerial gravity and authoritypreserved, lest that Ordinance become despicable, and so Ministers would both improve their reason, light, authority, and ministerial commission from Christ upon the conscience of those they have to do with, as we see Paul doth in his debates, even where his authority was much questioned.

CHAP. XI.

Admonition is necessary, and how to be performed.

The third step, is Admonition, that is, when convictions have no successe, then ought Ministers to proceed to judicial and authoritative-admonitions, as the word is in the direction. Tit.
3. 10. A man that is an Heretick, rejett, after the first and

and from admonstron. This admonstron hath no new realon to inform the judgement, which is already pre-

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The several Reps of admonition.

supposed to be done, but it addern these two. I. It hath a concurring weight to affect the conscience which hath withflood or (mothered the light : and fo it is, with Gods bleffing, ufeful to make former despited light more feriously and impartially to be weighted and confidered when in His Name the admonition is particularly upon that account directed to them. 2. It is a warning, giving advertisment of fome fadder thing coming, if they shall continue to reject the Truth, and lo it is a floring of them for that particular fault, before the stroak be laid on that either, by Gods bleffing, it may humble and toften them, and fo put them to endeavour the preventing of the coming ftroak; or, if they continue flubborn, ir may make them more mexcurable; and thus there is the clearer accesse to proceed to repetion. This admonreion may be confidered in these three steps, T. It may be in private, after the Minister's conferring with the perfous and his finding them guilty, he may not only infiruct them , but afterward if they commue, admonish them, and that as a Minister, in the Name and Authority of Jefus Chrift, which is more than the admonition of a private person. 2. There is a thep of this admonition to be past judicially by a Church-judicatory when the person is brought before them, whereby they judicially interpole their authority to admonish such a person of the evil of his way, and of the necessity of the present duty of repentance for the same, like that which finfully and most abominably was misapplied by the Priests and Pharifees, Act. 4. 5. yet, that in the general there is fuch an admonition, is apparent. The 3. Step is publickly before the people, wherein (after the former hath failed in reaching the defired end) the party infeeled is folemnly and publickly admoulfied before the Congregation. In which flep, 1. The parcies good is to be respected, that now it may be trick if the administration both of officers and people (who are tuppoled

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supposed to joyo in this publick admonition) may have weight. a. It is ufeful for the people to guird them against such an evil, and such a person. it succeed not, it leaveth the person more inexculable, and convinces all of the justice and necessity of procceding further, and so tenderh to make the Sentence to be the more respected by all. This, we coccive, is the admonition intended, Tir. 3. 10. and answereth

to the publick rebuke, spoken of, I Tim. 5. 20.

In carrying on these admopitions, these things Somethings would be observed, a. That there be no great hast- observabling ing, except the persons readinesse and diligence to the way of intest others require the same, in which case there is admonishno delay to be admitted. 2. All thefe steps of ad-ing. monition would be so carried on as becometh an Ordinance of Christ, and that the weight of them may lie there. 3. There is difference to be put betwint giving of an admonition, and entring of a debate for conference: Therefore there is no necessity of suspending an admonition, because the person is absent, more than there is of suspending of a warning or citation And, on the other fide, If the persons were present, and should contradict and oppose themselves, there is no necessity nor conveniency of entring in debate agein, because that is not the present work, but authoritatively to admonth those who have refilled intlicient conviction, and to they are to be left under the weight of the admonition, from which the renewine of debate would diminish.

The fourth thing and that which followeth fruit: That rejectless admonision is rejection, Tit. 3. 10. A man that is ing of an oban benetick, rejust. This rejection is the same with stinat Here-Accommunication or delivering to Satan, 1 Tim. 1.20, tick, is to Concerning which thefe things are clear,

1. Ther man , continuing an Heretick, may and cers anteefought to be rejected and excommunicated as well as fary duty, &for any other groffe Scandal: For, 1. the precept is a mean to be plain in the place cited, A man that is an Heretich, re- made use of jest; which must be a casting of him out from Church- for thechurcommunion, and a giving of him over in respect of the thes ediffe

Church-offinie cations

nfe of any further means for his edification, which is in effect, to account him as an Heathen man and a Publican, which is called, I Cor. s. 12. a putting away from amongst our selves a wicked person. 2. The example and precedent is clear, 1 Tim. 1. 20.2. Where this is followed it is commended, as in Ephefus. Rev. 2, and where it is forborn and corrupt reachers suffered to be in the Church, it is very sharply reproved as in the Epifiles to Pergamos and Thyatira. 4. The general grounds of Scandal and of Discipline against the same, and the reasons which inforce the exercise thereof in any case, have weight here. For. 1. It it is scandalous exceedingly. 2. It is hurtful to the Church. 3. Discipline, and particularly that Sentence, is appointed for remedying the hurts of the Church, and the removing of offences from the same; which grounds have been formerly cleared, Therefore it palpably followeth, that this Sentence is to proceed against such : But for further clearing of this, there are some Questions to be an-Iwered here, As,

1. It may be questioned, What if the person be What if the godly, or accounted so? Answ. I shall not say how person sedu- unlike it is that a really gracions man will be a sedbeliude- minister of Satan, we have spoken to that already; ed.to betru- but supposing it to be so, 1. If it be scandalous in a by gracious gracious man, is not the same remedy to be used for the Churches good? 2. That supposition of Paul's Gal. 1. 8, 9. doth put it above all question. Though me (faith he) or an Angel from Heaven, preach another Gospel, let him be accursed. And, again, he faith it, to put this out of controversie, If any man shall preach another Gofpel, let him be accurfed. And, if Paul will except no man, no, not himself, nay, nor an Angel from Heaven, who can be excepted? The mistake is in this, that Excommunication is not looked upon as an Ordinance of Christ, useful through His bleffing for humbling and reclaiming of a finner more than if it were not applied; whereas, if it were looked upon as medicinal in its own kind, it would

not be so constructed of ; For, by comparing 1 Cor; 4. with 2 Cor. 2. we will find that it was more profitable to the excommunicated person himself that this Sentence was past, than if it had been forborn.

2. It may he asked, What if the person be no fixed what if he member of any particular Congregation, who yet be no fixed doth infect others? Anfw. This cannot be sufficient member to exempt from Censure. Because, 1. he is a mem- anyparticuber of the Catholick Church. Therefore Centures lar Congremust some way reach him: otherwayes, supposing a gation. man to disclaim all particular congregations, he might be a member of the Church, who yet could be reached by no Cenfure. 2. He might claim the priviledges in any particular Congregation, if he should carry fairly as he is a member of the Church-catho lick: Therefore it would feem by proportion and rule of contraries, that Presbeteries may reach him with their Censures, if by his miscarriages he become offensive to the people. 3. We see that the Church of Ephelus, Rev. 2. did judicially try and censure those who called themselves Apostles, who, it's like, being ftrangers, obtruded themselves, under that title, upon them, and so could not be accounted members of that Church; And indeed, there is no lesse needful for the edification of the people of such particular Congregations, and for guarding them from the hurt that may come by vageing persons, than that either they be censured somewhere by one Congregation, or many, in affociated Church-judicatories; or, at least that some publick note and mark be pur upon such, that others may have warning to eschew them, as the word may be taken, Rom. 16. 17, 18. and 2 Theff. 3. 14. which is there spoken of busie bodies and wanderers without any certain calling or station.

3, It may be questioned, What if Magistrates in what if Cirtheir place concur not, or, if the case so fall out, that vil magithey be displeased with the drawing-forth of such a strates consentence? Answ. This may require the more pru-cur not for dence, zeal and circumspectnesse, but ought not to the backing mar the progresse: Because, 1. Excommunication is of the server.

an tence.

an Ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ for the edificarion of His Church, as Preaching and giving of the Sacraments are, 2. That fame might have been asked in the Primitive times when Paul did excommunicate, and when the Lord did reprove the want thereof, Rev. 2. There was then no concurrence of Civil Power. Yea, 3. in this case it feemeth moft necessary; and the greatest enemies of Church-discfpline do allow the Church to Sentence her members 4. The weight of this Sentence doth in fuch a cale. not depend upon Civil Power, but upon Chrife's Infrieution. Therefore the weight of it is tobe laid here, whatever Civil Powers do. 5. We will find the primitive Fathers hazarding upon Martyrdom even in this very thing, So that when corrupt Emperours have inhibited them to excommunicate Arians and other Hereticks, they have done it notwithstanding and by defigning whom they defired to have fucceeding them in their places before they past the Sentence, did declare themselves ready to suffer, upon this account, any thing that might follow, and accordingly some of them have been immediately put to fufferring.

Two limitations to be adverted in therejecting of Hereticks

2. We say, That although an Heretick be to be rejected, yet is there a twofold limitation to be adverted to in that place, Tit. 3. 9. first, That it is not every erronious person that is so to be dealt with, but he must be an Heretick: Which doth imply these three, 1. A pernicious nesses and destructive nesses in the errour maintained. 2. An actual vending thereof, to the destruction of the Church, either by corrupting the doctrine, marring the order, or breaking the unity of the same, or some other way spoiling the vines that spoil the tender grapes. 3. It implies a pertinacy in such evils.

It is true, that sometimes lesser errour, in respect of their effects, and other aggravating circumstances, may become intollerable and to be proceeded against by this Sentence, as was said of lesser Scandals in practice. Yet, we conceive, that properly it is some

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groffer errour than what may be accounted to be of infirmity (such as many godly, soher, unprejudged men may have) that is to be the ground of such a Sentence. Therefore we refer the decision of this to be gathered from the Distinctions formerly laid down.

2. We find it qualified by this, That this rejection is not to proceed haftily, but to follow upon rejected and fleighted admonitions: Therefore, if an admonition be received before, and the Church therein be heard, there is no further proceeding to be in reference to this Sentence: Because, 1. the limitation is expresse. 2. The reason is clear; for if the lesser do the turn, and prevail to the recovery of the person, and removing of the offence from the Church, What needeth more?

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CHAP. XIL

what is to be accounted a fatisfying and successful ad-

If it be asked, What is to be accounted a fatisfyling and successful admonition? and how men
are to judge of, and walk in reference to, the same?

Answ. We would distinguish satisfaction or successe
as to an admonition, which may be either full satisfaction or only partial. Full satisfaction is, when the
person is so sully convinced of his ill, as not only to fore
bear the venting thereof, and to give no offence for
the time to come, but also sully to abandon the same
as being grieved therefore, and willing to edific others by a suitable acknowledgement.

Again, we call that a partial farisfaction or fuccesse, when though there is not a fully farisfying length obtained; yet can it not be said to be altogether fruit-lesse. As suppose, i. a person should not be brought wholly to disclaim his errours, yet should prosesse a conviction of the ill of venting them, and troubling the Church with them, and afterward should engage

Some useful Distinctions of satissattion.

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to abitain from offending in that kind. 2. Suppose one should be convinced of the more groffe errours, and be concentro disclaim these, yet should stick at some others, professing scruple in them,

We would also diffinguish these that give partial satisfaction. I. Either they are such as appear to be sincerein the length they come, and in the professions they make, as also to be docide and ready to be informed; or, they are such who discover the want of ingenuity in their proceeding, and themselves but to be lying at the wait to return to their vomit.

Now to apply this, We fay, 1. When this fatisfaction is full, there is no queffion; for, thereby not only all further processe is to be fifted, but the person is to be admitted to have communion in Church-priviledges.

2. Where this partial successe is of the first fort, We conceive it may be sufficient to sist processe for a time; and to continue the persons under meanswithin the Church, so long as they contradict not their prosession; yet it is not sufficient to give them free accesse to all Church-priviledges, as if the scandal were fully removed.

3, Where that satisfaction is but of the last kind, that is, mocking and dissembled, We say, that though it may put a Church-judicatory to try the evidences of this dissimulation, and during that time possibly to stop a little their proceeding; yet ought it not to mar the drawing forth of the Sentence, less there be an accession to the hurt which is intended to the Church by that dissembler: And here we are to apply both the reasons against, and characters of, dissimulation, which were spoken to on practical offences:

4. If there be no feeming fatisfaction at all, then after admonitions given; the person despising the same is to be rejected, as one that is infectious and unfit to bave communion in the Church, or the benefit of any Church-priviledge and ordinance: And, in a word, to be, for his scandal, and obstinacy against Christs Ordinances, declared to be excommunicate,

and

and caften out of His visible Kingdom, as an out-law to the lame; Which is to be done with such gravity. weightineffe sympathy and authority, at it may look like the Ordinance of Christ, and have an impection of His dread and Majesty upon all that are witnesses

If it be asked , Whether any further duty be re- whether any quired from a Minister towards such a person after thing be retheSentence is paft? Anfw.He is not then properly un- quired der paftoral charge, fince he is no member of Christs Ministers vifible Church, at least, in that respect, as members towards befall under common and ordinary actual inspection. reticks that Yet we conceive, t. That the Minister is to continue arerejetied. to deal with God for him (at least in private) if so be he may be recovered out of this frare, because he is under the last cure, which will either prove life or death; Gods bleffing therefore to it, is to be foughts and It becometh well the natural care of a kindly Minifter, that is thrifting for the bleffing, to deal with God for it. 2. Although there be not actual accesse to any thing; yet ought there to be a lying at the waitro observe any opportunity which may be for his good, and when it offereth, it would be carefully improven. And therefore, a. for that end, whatever indignation be showen against a mans wayes or errours, to make these loathsome to others, yet fill there would be evidence of tender respect to the persons, and, if need be, means used to supply them, especially if they come to any strait, although in all this they would keep such a distance as may keep up the weight of the Sentence, both to them and others: Bur, by this way, their suspicious mistakes of Minifters, carnalnesse against their persons, are best removed, and accesse is thereby made to be edifying unto them, some examples whereof are recorded in the. life of Musculus, as to his tendernesse to most desperately deluded persons, when they were in affliction, and discountenanced exceedingly by Magistrates, which God bleffed in the end for their recovery; this is fuitable, severity in Magistrates, and tendernesse

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in Ministers. A sid amongst other ills and shares that that cruel indulgencie (which is indeed cruel to the poor fools, to whom it becometh a fuare) buth intlowing to this is one, That the Magistrate is accounted merciful, and the zealous Minister cruel, whereby they are put in an incapacity to be edified by the one, and in a capacity, as it were, to militarity as they will, by the indulgence of the other.

CHAP XIII.

what is required of magifixates for restraining of seducing foiriss

THe fecond thing that we propoled to fpeak to in this remedy, was, as it relater h to Magistrares, to wit, Whether any thing be? or what it is that is called for by the word of God from them, to be performed in their flations for the drying up of fuch a flood, and removing of fuch a plague? It is not our mind to infift to much in this as in the former. Yet itris firthat we lay formething : And who knoweth but it may fall in the hand of fome Magistrate, who may be defirous to hear and know his daty? which we shall lay down in an affertion, or two, thus,

terpofe.

Affert. 1. Although God hath not made Magistrates, as such, Church-officers, nor intrusted them with the Ecclefiaftick Government of His Church : They arecal- yet doth he allow them, and call them to improve led accord- their civil power for the good of his Church in Ecing to their clefiaftick things in some respect, as well as in civil places to in- things. And therefore if a Magistrate see not to the providing of Ministers for a people, and of maintenance to them, and fuch like, that are necessary for the being of a church, as well as he provideth Offioers, and furnisheth them that are needful in the State, he is faulty and unfaithful to his truft. For, the Lords defign is in ferling of Societies, and appointing of Magistrates, is to be expounded as subservient

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to that great end of mens, glorifying of God, and enjoying him. And certainly, Magiffrates are to have that as their own end, even in the actions of their lisrion, and to endeavour to promove that amongst clear in all the Governments and Commonwealths that the Lord did immediatly model Himfelf . Magiftrates had this for a special part of their task . to keep His Ordinances pure, and to reffrain the corrupters of them: This is expressed in the Moral Law. where Mafters are no leffe to overfee their fervants. that they work not on the Sabbath, from respect to the Lord, than to direct their work all the week from respect to themselves; and by the rules of interpreting of these commands, what belongeth to a Master to be done by him as a Mafter in reference to these over whom he hath power according to his fration, that doth belong to all Magistrates in reference to these under their charge, according to their stations. Also, where one inflance is named, all of that kind are comprehended. And therefore as this Ordinance of fanctifying the Sabbath, is to be overfeen by Superiours to also are all others: yea, it is acknowledged alfo, that what is expressed in one command in respect of the extent thereof, is to be understood in all. And therefore this obligation lyeth on Superiours, to make inferiours observent of Gods Ordinances in reference to all the commands: this is not doubted of the duties in the fecond Table : yet there is no expression in it inferring the same, so expresse as in the first; and this is a common affertion, Magistrates bave both Tables of the Law committed to their keeping. This is fully made out by many godly and learned men, and we need not to infift upon it; for, readily, no Magistrate doth question his own power, but that he may do what is fit, all the mattet is to confider what that is.

Aftert. 2. It is not a Magistrates duty in the case of And overspreading delusion, meerly to look to outward meerly order and civil peace and injury, and to give liberty look to outto- ward order.

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to any or many forts of dangerous errours and delufions to spread; or to give teleration unto the maintainers thereof, in their spreading the fame. For. I. fuch errours, are ill deeds, and fuch forcaders, are ill doers, bringing great prejudice to people . Galle. 20. 2Epift. of John 11. 2. Magiffrates ought to be a rerrour to evil doers indefinitly; and, I suppose if the (word be born in vain in reference to them, the conscience will not have ground of quiernelle in the day of judgement, upon a diffinction of evil doers. when the Lord hath made none such in their commisfion. 3. They ought to be zealous of His honour who is their Superiour, that His name be not blafphemed : and can such be tolerate without this confirmalon, upon the matter, that men have liberty to blafpheme the Name of God, to abuse His truth, reproach His Ordinances, and to take His Name in vain as they will? Would any supream Magistrare take ir well, to have some inferiour officer, or Magifirst of a Town or Province, to give fuch liberty to these under his jurisdiction in reference to him? And is there any such distance between the supream and inferiour Magistrate, as there is between the Majesty of God and the must supream power on earth? And what if He judge between Him and them out of their own mouth, and, according to the measure that they met out to others, met out to them? 4. Are they not to feek the peoples good? Or, are there any fuch good, as their spiritual good? And is there any such enemies to that as feducers? We conceive therefore, it will not be found agreeable to the intent of their office and scope which they ought to aim at therein, that Magistrates should give this liberty or connivance to men, to vent and propagate fuch errours as may deftroy fouls, and actually to overturn the faceof a visible Church, to that if something overspread univerfally, (as Popery, and some other groffe errours and delutions have done in fome places of the world) there should be no visible Church within such dominions; And indeed, upon these principles, men can-

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not impute it to their own care, that it is otherwayes Alfo, such loofpelie may overturn Ordinances, and fet up abominations in the room thereof, remove all Ministery, Sacraments, Discipline and Preaching, and all upon pretext of confcience : fuch delutions have been in the world; and if by Magistrates connivance, they shouldoverspread a Nation, so as there could be no remedy applied, would it be fatisfying or comfortable to him (supposing him to have a conscience) to see hispeople under him in such a posture? What if under pretext of conscience, Magistracie should be denied to be an Ordinance of God, and he put therefrom upon that account, that the people thought it unlawful to obey him? Would not resdily his conscience say, That seing he restrained nor others from casting at these Ordinances, in which the honour of God, and good of fouls were fo much concerned, that it was just with God to permit them to cast at that Ordinance also, wherein he is so mainly concerned? And indeed, this hath not been unfrequently feen, that these who have begun to cast at Church-ordinances, have come at length (as if they had been thereto disposed by the former) to cast at Civil Ordinances (to speak so) also; and what wonder is it, feing there is no more clear warrant from God for the one than for the other?

If it be said, that what hath been spoken in the doctrine, and on these places, Rev. 2. concerning the not suffering of corrupt teachers to venttheir errours, doth belong to Ministers and Church-officers, and not to Magistrates. Answ: 1. If thou be a Magistrate that moveth this objection, pose thyown heart, if that which is so displeasing in Ministers and Church-officers, to wit, toleration of corrupt men to spread their errours; if, I say, that will be well pleasing and approven in Magistrates, when Christ Jesus shall come to judge both in reference to this thing; Or, if in that day when the great Judge will Sentence Ministers for tolerating in such a case. He will take another rule to proceed by, with the Magistrate? Or

That the grounds against toleration concern Magistrates as
wellas Ministers,

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If it be like, that Christ out of love to Als Church that peremptority require Ministers, nor to fuffer falle reachers, but to refleam them, according to their stations, and nor to endure them to teach and seduce His Servants, and yet, that the fame Lord, for the good of His Church , thould require Magiffraces to toltrate and maintain the lame. 2. Confider if the grounds and reasons that bind this duty on Ministers. will not equivalently and proportionably bind all men according to their flations, for the grounds are in fum, love to God, and love to the edification and falvarion of others, which are the Substance and fulfilling of the moral Law. 3. If in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, or in History fince, thele two be not ever joyned together, the most commended Magistrate, and one who is most zealous against corrupt teachers; the fathers of old were not to spare their children, Deut. 12. nor suffer them to teach or feduce to the dishonour of God, and hazard of fouls; and can it be faid that fouls now are leffe precious, or errour now leffe infectious and dangerous, or these things lesse to be cared for now in the dayes of the Gospel than formerly, that concern the glory of God, and edification or deffruction of fouls? 4. Confider if in the Book of the Revelation, the fuffering of Antichrift to delude fouls, be not mentioned as reproveable; and if the deftroying of that beast, and putting himfrom corrupting the earth, be not poken of as a main piece of the commendation of such as shall be inflrumental therein. Now in the Scripture-language, all deluders and feducers are Antichrists, being led with the same spirit, and driving the same design against the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; Can there be therefore any reason to make such difference, where the Lord hath not made it? 5. Confider if it can be accounted fingle zeal, that perswadeth to permitthe Name of God to he dishonoured, when any reflection upon our own, doth fo much move us; for, it doth infer, that either there is an indifferency as to truth and errour. So that in the one, the Lord is

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not more dilhonoured than in the other, which will be found exceeding contrary to His own expressing of Himself in Scripture, and will not, I suppose, be pleased in the day of judgement, when He will a-Schige Hindelf on fuch seducers; or, it must infer. that men are nor to take notice of what diffionoureth Him, even though many things be within their reach to impede it. And indeed, if a confcience feriously pondering the thing, will not be provoked out of zeal to God, whole glory fuffereth, out of respect to the falvation of many fouls, that are hazarded and defiroyed by flich means, and to prevent the many offences that wait necessarily upon such ills, and the many inconveniencies, divisions, jelousies, renes, &c. that follow in Families, Congregations, Ciries and Nations, and the great prejudice that the Commonwealth inffereth, by the distracting of her members amongst themselves, the incapacitating of many for publick truft, the foftering of diverse interfers and contrary principles in one body, to the marring of honest publick defigns: If by these, I say, the zeal and conscience of these who are concerned, be not provoked, by what will, or can, they be?

If it be faid, That it looketh more Gospel-like, and for the furtherance of Christs Kingdom, that foreberance Magiffrates should leave men to follow their light, and to be dealt with by the preaching of the Golpel, and force thereof. We shall propose these considerations in reference to this. 1. Confider if it looketh chriftian and tender like, for men fo to fland by in the Lord's Caufe, and to fet Him do (as it were) for Himself: It was indeed once said of Baal, Judg. 6. If he be a god, ter him plead for himfelf: Bur wil a tender heart think or speak so reproachfully of the Majeffy of God? He indeed can and will plead for Himfelf; and it is not for defect of power He maketh use of men, to defend His truth, or to reftrain errours: yer it is His good pleasure to make use of Magistrates therein, (and thereby to honour them) as He doth of Gideon in that fame place. 2 Confider if it look

That total is not like the Gospel.

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christian-like, to give the devil equal accelle to follow his deligns with Jelus Christ in the setting up of his kingdom: Now absolute teleration doth this, and more because there is but one Truth, and there are Many errours, and each of these hath that same liberry and indemnity (to fay fo) that Truth hath, and may with the same confidence come forth to the open light as Truth may, in respect of any Civil restraine. 2. Consider the case of Antichrist, there is no errour against which the Lord hath more directly engaged Himself to fight with the sword of His mouth, than against this of Papery, and yet we suppose none will think that Kings might warrantably fuffer it to be spread and preached to the infecting of their People, without adding or joyning any restraint by their Civil power; certainly their bating of the whore, and making ber defelate, doth imply some other thing; And where-ever true harred of Errour is, there will be more effectual fireaching of mens power, and places for restraining the same, 4. We may adde this confideration, That hitherto toleration of Errours and diverfity of corrupt opinions have ever been looked upon, and made use of as a most subtile meanfor undermining and destroying of the Church. It is marked of that skilful enemy of the Kingdom of Jefus Christ, Julian, That having improven his subtility to the utmost to find outmeans to destroy the Church by craft, which his predecessors by violense could not obtain, amongst other means he concluded this, Nor to raise open persecution, but to give liberty to all the differing Bilhops and Teachers which then; after the Council of Nice and Conflantins death, were very many and bitter in their differences) to follow their own way, and to vent their own opinions, withour all fear of any referaint : and therefore did call them that he might make intimation thereof to them for their further encouragement therein; The words which he used to them, as they are marked by Ammianus and cired by Ledouicus Melineus, pag. 560. arc, tet consopitis civilibus discordiis, sue quisqua Religioni Servi-

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ferviret intrepidus, that is, in fum, That every one forbearing Civil discords, should worship in his own Reli-Zion with out controle or fear : And it is like, that this thall prove a mean uleful for the good of the Church, which that expert child of the devil did make use

of to deltroy the fame?

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Our third Affertion then is, That Magistrates in their places ought to prevent the infection of their people under them by corrupt doctrine, and the recovery of them when they are enfnared : and that therefore they ought to restrain and marre corrupt teachers from spreading of their errours to seduce others. This Affertion, we suppose, is clear from the former two: for, if Magistrates be allowed to improve their power for the good of the Church, and if it be not their duty to give common protection to Errour, and the venters thereof, with Truth: Then this will follow, that they ought to use their power to restrain the same, and, by the exercise thereof, to procure the good of their people, in preferving of them from fuch a great evil.

It's Magi-Arates duty to prevent the infection of the people under them.

CHAP. XIV.

What may be justly acknowledged to be within the reach and power of the magistrate in such a case, and lo, what is his duty.

IT may be more difficult to explicate this, and to thew what is within the Magistrares reach, or, what way he is to follow this. Before we answer, we

would premir.

1. That it is not intended, that Magistrates should rigidly and severely (much lesse equally) animadvert upon all in their judgement are erroneous, or differ from what is truth, that is not called for from Ministers. Therefore here the former distinctions are to be remembred and applied: for there is great odds betwixt animadverting uponan abfurd errour, or taking

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king notice thereof as it is a thing of the mind and, it may be a feruple in fome confeience, and as it is an external deed, having with it real offence, prejudice and forceth no mans confeience to another Religion, but doth keep his own confeience, by keeping one that is deluded from feducing of others, or wronging the Name of the Lord or His Church.

2. It is to be adverted, that we speak not here of the Magistrates duty in punishing of corrupt teachers with civil or capital punishments, (though we doubt not but in some cases their power doth reach to that) much lesse are the highest punishments to be understood here; whatever be truth in these, we do not now search into it, because the Scope is according to the affertion, to consider what is called-for, for the preventing of the spreading of corrupt doctrine, and the preserving or recovering of a people therefrom.

3. This doth not give way to Magistrates to condemn and restrain what they think errour, or what others think errour; for, Ministers that ought to reject Hereticks, are not warranted to reject whom they account so, but who indeed are so; So is it here, it is what is indeed errour, and who are indeed the teachers thereof, that the Magistrate is to restrain, as those who teach rebellion against the Lord.

We come then to confider what may be a Magifirates duty when seducing spirits assault the people
under their charge, and what is obviously in their
power to do for preventing of hurt by them, without infisting in any difficult or odious-like case. Their
duty also may be considered in a fourfold respect, as
that of Ministers was. I. It would be considered
with respect to God, and so they ought to sear some
stroak coming upon their people, and by looking to
Him to endeavour to carry so in reference thereto, as
they may be countable to Him: for, If it be a priviledge for Magistrates in the Christian Church to have
the honour of being nursing fathers therein, 1/2. 49.
23. then it must be a great credit, mercy and sati-

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faltion to them, to have their people or foller (today breafts; and if fo, then the mif-thriving of the Church by unhealthforn milk of errour should and will exceedingly affect them. And certainly that expreffion doth both fhew what a Magistrate's duty is. and how tenderly he ought to nourish the Church and preferre her from any thing that may hurt her as also it showeth how nearly any thing that may hart

the Church ought to touch and prick him.

2. In respect of themselves, they are to consider if by any guildinesse of theirs the Lord be provoked to let loofe fuch a spirit, as Solomons fins did procure the renting of the Kingdom. So might they be also counted a cause, bringing-on that idolatry and defection of Feroboam from the Truth, as well as from him and his posterity ! Also if by their negligence in not providing faithful Teachers to instruct the people, by their conniving at errours, or tolerating them, or otherwayes they may be charged with accession thereto: Thus Jerobeams appointing the meanest of the people to be Priefts, and his beginning defection by his example, though he feemed not altogether to forfake the trueGod (disposed the people for a further length, and had influence upon their going a whoring after Baat and other Idols of the Nations : Thus also Solomon was guilty of much graffe idolarry by his connivance at it, and taking himfelf to worldly pleafures and miskenning the things of God, although it's like he did not actually fall in that groffe idolatry him-And if Magistrates were seriously reflecting on themselves, and affected with their own negligence and carelefnesse in preventing of such things, whereof possibly they might find themselves guilty, this were a great length, and other questions would be the fooner cleared, and feriousnesse would make them find our remedies for such an evil,

3. Their duty may be looked upon in referencete others, wherein they may and ought to extend themselves for preventing the spreading of the insection

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amongst their that are clean, by such like means!
As, 1. by their example, to show themselves realous against that ill and to abhor the questioning and did. puting of the truth; thus the example of a Magistrate is often of much weight, yet can it not be accounted any coaction. 2. They ought to endeavour to have faithful and honest Ministers, who by their diligence and overfight may exceedingly conduce to the confirming of these that stand, and to the Preventing of more hurt. 2. They may and ought to councenance and ftrengthen fuch as are faithful, whether among Ministers or people, which often hath no little influence upon the disappointing of seducers: thus it is faid, 2Cor. 20, 22, that for promoving of Refor marion . Hizekiah fooke comfortably to all the Leviter that taught the good knowledge of the Lord : which is added, to shew that by this incouraging of honest and faithful Ministers beyond others, he did define the thriving of the work in their hands, both by heart ning them to be zealous in it, and also by making them to have the more weight with others : this is also marked of Constantine and other good Emperours. that zealous and faithful Ministers were particularly taken notice of and honoured by them, beyond others. 4. They may and ought to employ and make use of fome fit instruments for the preventing of seduction. and may provide fuch as may be fet apart for trudying such controversies, and confuting of such errours. that the truth may be the more clear. 5. They may and ought to endeavour according to their place the composure and allayment of all the lester and more petry differences and heart-burnings that may be found amongst these that are, in the main, one for truth; for often (as was faid) a vehement spirit of errour and delufion is trifted with heart-burnings divisions and offences in the Church, and amongst the Officers thereof; there were petry contests in Corinth, biting and devouring one of another in Galatia, tryfted with the harmony that was amongst the followers of the seducers: and at the Council of Nice there was not

only

only difference with Arian and other grolie here-ticks, but also there were percy differences and conrefts amongst the Bilhops and Confesiors who stood for truth; and these differences are most advantage-HAT! ous to the spreading of errour, and the removing thereof is a great bulwark against the same. It is marked of Constantine at that Council of Nice, that amongst other meanes which he used to suppresse the 100 Arian herefie, he did most carefully endeavour the removing and burying of such differences and divifions and by ferious Oration preffed the oblivion of all fuch, that they might the more unitedly and with the leffe diversion be in capacity to oppose the common enemy. For certainly, when Ministers are armed one against another upon some lesse concerning and more unprofitable debates, (as alas! too much of them is in the Christian reformed-Church this time) there cannot but be the leffe ffrength. zeal, and vigilancy against professed enemies in the most substancial things. 6. They may, and ought to interpose their Authority, for inhibiting the receiving and hearing, or converfing with known and manifest seducers: for this is but to discharge, and thereby to preferve the people from runing to their own hazard, even as men ought to be commanded to keep at distance with a place or person suspected to be infectious because of the Pestilence; neither could fuch a refrraintbe accounted any diminution of their just liberty, yea this were but a Putting to of their fanction to the clear direction which the Lord layeth upon His people, and therefore there could be nohazardto miscarry in it, especially where the application to fuch and fuch persons, might be as clearly differnable from the Word as the duty is. 7. They might and ought to give their countenance unto, and joyn their Authority with fuch ecclefialtick statutes, overrures, or means, as Church-judicatories or Officers might be about to make use of for this end in their places; and this can be no more prejudice to liberty, to countenance with their Authority the Or-

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dinance of Discipline, than to confirmbly their Authority the Ordinance of preaching the Gospel. 2. They may and ought to preferve the Ordinances from being interrupted, and the administrators thereof from being reproached, and might justly confute these things when committed. 9. In recovering a people, in reeling and staggering time, a Magistrate may engi them to formerly received truth, and interpole his authority for this end, as is recorded of Foliah, 2Chron. 34- 31, 32, 33. Alfo, 10. He may and oughe to re move all falle worthips, and endure no corrupt preaching, or writing, or meetings for that end, of administrating of corrupted Sacraments for any Ordinance other then what is allowed; for, Josiah did caule the people frand to the Covenant that was made and having removed all Idolatrous worthin, he made Iffaet to ferve the Lord, that is, he made them abandon corrupt worthip, and wait on pure Ordinances, as keeping of the Sabbaths, offering of Sacrifices, &c. and that according to the manner prescribed by the Lord. Neither was it a wronging of their liberty, to do lo : Because, 1. it was the preservation of their liberty, to keep them from the abominable bondage of these evils. 2. It was their duty to abstain from the and to follow the Ordinances purely, and the Magistrate may well put people to that. . g. it is one thing by force to keep folks from dilhonouring God in a corrupt Religion, (as Johah did)another to force them to Religion; the one belongeth to the or dering of the outward man the other to the inward 4. He might order them to keep the Ordinances, and in going about them to keep the rule, because that is but a conftraining of them to the means whereby Religion worketh, and a making them, as it were, to give God a hearing, leaving their yeelding and confenting to him, when they have heard him, to their own wills, which cannot be forced; yet it is reason that when God cometh by His Ordinances to treat with a people, that a Magistrate should so far respect His glory and their good, as to interpole His Authority

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ricy to make them hear. 5. Also, there is a difference between the confirming of a circumcifed or baptized people, to worship God in the purity of Ordinances, as they have been engaged thereto, which was Josia's practice, and the constraining of a people to engage and be baptized, which were not formerly engaged; because, actual members of a Church have not even that liberty as others have, to abandon Ordinances: and this puttern them to no new engagemental Religion, but pressent them to continue under former engagements, and accordingly to perform: Hence we see, that both in the Old and New Testament, Church-members have been put to many things, and restrained from many things, which had not been personent in the case of others. See, 2 Chron.

In the fourth place, there are many things also in their power, in reference to these that are seducers or deluders, or actually deluded, which might be and eacht to be improven for the Churches good; (not to focak now of any thing that may infer civil or capitil punishment, upon men for their opinions, or any way looklike the enforcing of Religion upon consciences) As, 1. Magistrates might and ought to put Ministers and Church-officers and others to their duty (in case they be negligent) in trying, discoverring, convincing, &c. such as by their corrupt do-Grine may hazard others. 2. They may and ought to discountenance such in their own persons, and, by their authority, inhibit them to vent any such thing; yea under certifications: yet this cannot be called a foreing of their conscience to any Religion, but is only the reftraining of them from hurring of the consciences of others. 3. When such certifications are contraveened, he may and ought to censure the contraveeners, and so he may by his authority put them in an incapacity of having accesse to infect others; yet this is not the censuring of a mans opinion, for he might possesse his opinion without censure, but it is the centuring of his disobedience, and the preju-

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dice done by him to others : Nor is it the reftraining of him from personal liberty, because of it, but because he doth not, nor will not use his personal liberty without prejudice to the whole body, which is to be preferred to him : even as a man, infected with the peffilence, ought juffly to be reftrained, though against his will; yet cannot that be accounted a reftraint of just liberty; for, it is no just liberty to have liberty to hurt others. 4. They may and ought to deftroy such books as they use to pread for the infecting of others, and inhibit and flop printing of them or actual felling, spreading or transporting of them as they may flop carrying of suspected or forbidde goods. 5. They may and ought to restrain idle and vagabound travelling of such suspected persons, with out representing of their necessary bufinesse to tome appointed for that effect, in which cale their doing hurt by fuch a voyage, might be prevented, and the have a passe, Also, they might constrain them is follow some lawful occupation, and to be diligen therein; both these are well consistent with order of a State, And yet it is fuch bufie bodies (as th Apostle speaketh and vagabounds, that go withou their station schat often prove most hurtful to the Church, and instrumental to the devil, as bei Apostles to him in such a businesse. 6. They may and ought to reffrain and Cenfure all blasphemo and irreverent expressions and speeches against the Majesty of God and His Ordinances, and all calum nies and bitternesse against faithful Ministers or Pro fessours that adhere to truth : for, these are moral fine and blasphemy, calumny, and such like, are no more to be passed over without Censure in such, than others who are not professedly tainted with errous and the pretext of following light and conscience, can not make these fins tolerable, more than the Nicola tans pretending the same for their committing adultery and other filthinesse: And this is not to punish mens opinions, or force their consciences, but to pu nish their vices, even such as have been hateful unto

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and punished by, many natural and heathen men. 1. They may and ought by their authority to cause them hear conferences orderly and reverently, give answers discreetly, wait on their trial, and such like. before Ecclefiaftick Affemblies. 8. They may and ought to make such incapable of publick places of truft, and remove them from such: Because, 1. they cannot be supposed to imploy their power fingly. 2. Because such trust agreeth not to men and subjects as such, but are voluntarily conferred as tokens of refeed pur upon men eminently qualified, and as may be for the good of the Commonwealth : And therefore it cannot be justly accounted a marring of their liberty as men or subjects. Upon this ground was Maachah the mother of Asa removed from being Queen, or having any government, 1 King. 15. 13. a Chron. 15. 16. yet it cannot be faid fhe was wronged when she was so dealt with.

In these steps mentioned, we have not aimed to lay down what might be done to the utmost in such a case, but what we suppose cannot be in reason denied by these of the widest principles in reference to this matter, if so be they degenerate not utterly to loofbeffe. badd

If it be faid, That it feemeth fufficient for the Ma- It is not pilirate to maintain civil peace, and to refirain civil sufficient to diffurbances: We may look to these confiderations a Magiin answer to this, 1. This is no more than what strate to Julian did reffrain, as the place cited before, cleareth; maintain and certainly, he who ruleth for Christ, will not civil peace. think his example a good pattern. 2. This is that which heathens do out of meer respect to themselves: and shall Christian Magistrates have no respect to Christ but to themselves? or, do no more for Christianity, than heathens who owned it not? 2. Is it possible to separate growth in delusions and variety of absurd errours, and civil faction and discord? or, in experience have they ever been separated? We see they made men carnal in Corintb, they made them bite and devour one another in Galatia, as, chap. 5.

of that Epifile to them; yea, provoked to debates, envying, wraths, ftrifes, back-bitings, whilperings, (wellings, turnults, 2 Cor. 12. 20. and can fuch things be with the entertaining of civil peace? For doth not the interruption of civil peace, flow from hatred, bitternesse, alienation of mind, envy, contradictions and fuch like? And do not these necessarily wait on debates, and divertities of opinions? For, it is not to be supposed, that such differences, proceeding from want of fight, can be in men that are altogether mortified, and without corruption: Therefore may it be expected, that that corruption will flame out upon fuch occasions; and that order is observable which the Apostle hath, 2 Cor. 12. just now cited, where he beginneth with debates, and proceedeth by diverse steps, till it close with tumults: and these who are acquainted with the Histories of older and latter times, will acknowledge this to be a truth. 4. There is almost but very little in the foregoing particulars mentioned, but what is necessary for the preserving and restoring of civil peace, or the preventing or censuring of the diffurbance thereof, leing there can be no folid ground whereupon to maintain peace, except the springs of debates and tumults be stopped, and fuch diffempers from which they fpring, be either cured and purged away, or restrained, & It may be confidered in experience, if ever fuch a way hath done good to the Church, (whose divisions and of fences have often thereby come to an height) or to these that were seduced, seing thereby not only the tentation was armed against them, but they, at least, permitted to harden themselves therein, as in a thing not fo gross to wife States-men, as some conceitie Ministers would make it to appear: Or, in the last place. it may be confidered, if ever it hath done good to the State, wherein it was permitted, or to the Magistrates who did permit the same; or, if thereby secret jealoufies, heart-burnings, divisions and factions have not been fostered and brought up to such height as hathproven dangerous to the body, and hath hazarded the art rearing

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CHAP. XV.

what is called-for from people who are desirous to keep themselves pure in such a time and case as the increasing of errours and seducers.

Trefteth now, that we speak something of a peoples duty, that are members of the Church where such delusions are vented: in speaking to which we shall follow almost the same method as in the former.

1. Then, people would be affected upon the appearance of such an ill, as upon the news of sword, famine or pestilence; for then, as it were, the trumpet foundeth like that Angels proclamation, Rev. 8. 12. Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the Angels that are to sound, when as yet all these Angels did principally forwarn of spiritual plagues, and particularly of delufions. This would make people wary and serious; this would curb vanity, mocking, laughing and puffing up; this would make him that standeth, take heed lest he fall, if the judgement were confidered as a thing coming from God, and evidencing Him to be angry, and to threaten: and without this there is little ground to expect profiting by any other direction.

2. People would be feriously affected with the falling or hazard of the falling of any they hear of, as being touched with zeal for God, and sympathic with them, and for this cause, would humble themselves before God to deprecate that stroak and plague as

they would do fword, famine or peftilence.

3. People would try in what tearms themselves are with God, and if things inwardly be in good case, if there be any guiltinesse procuring, or disposing for the same plague, such as little love to the truth, little study of the knowledge of the truth, little zeal against

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errour, or simpathy with infected Churches that are at a distance, laughing, it may be, at such things without any other use making thereof, little prayer for others, or exhorting or admonishing of them, (which is a mean for preventing of unftedfastnesse) little indeavour, according to mens places, to have others inffructed, or to have faithful, able, and godly Ministers for that end; but, it may be, on the contrary, much spiritual pride, self-conceitednesse, tenaciousnesse, and addictednesse, to our own wills and opinions, prejudice at able and faithful Teachers, and readinelle to hear every thing, and every person. These, and fuch like, may be tried, and when found, ought to be mourned for, as causes of humiliation to them for their accession to such a plague.

4. They would endeavour the strengthening and confirming of themselves in the knowledge of necesfary Truths, and would exercise themselves in the practice of uncontroverted Godlinesse, and, by all means, would eschew jangling debates in unnecessary things, knowing that that is a piece of the enemic Subtility, once to engage, if it were but in the meanest thing; for, thereby he doth not only divert from more necessary things, and weareth away livelinesse, but doth dispose for greater things, as was formerly marked in his method of dealing: For, as in corrupt practices, men are not at first brought to an height of prophanity, but by degrees; So is it in corrupt dodrines: and therefore there is warineffe called-for here in debating or questioning the meanest Truth, if

any Truth be mean.

5. If any thing be really doubted of, means would be used in a lober prudent way for attaining information, either by providing and reading of some fit Book, wherein often reasons are more deliberate and full, and may be more deliberately studied and digested than in a transient discourse; but in this, special respect would be had to a right choice, and for that cause the judgments of such as are sound and able to discern, would be followed in this; or, where God giveth

eveth occasion, it may be done in sober and christian onference with others of ability and integrity, especially with Ministers, who ought neither to decline, nor rashly misconstruct the same, but affectionatly and renderly to welcom any fuch lober persons, lest they be provoked to confult with others, who may prove Physicians of no value. In this, people would not expresse their doubts in all companies at random, nor to, or before, fuch many possibly more easily take up the doubt, and with more difficulty be brought off; when therefore such a doubt is to be moved, the party and the time would be deliberatly chosen, that men may be ferious therein, and no doubt, would be moved for debate, but either fuch as the mover can himfelf loofe, or in fuch company where he may expect to have it looled.

6. People would endeavour exceedingly to have good effeem of their Ministers and Guides, and to be diligent and reverent observers of all Ordinances, especially at such a time; for, Ministers are Guides, Heb. 13. 17. And Ordinances are appointed to keep people from being staggered, Eph. 4.11,12,13,14. and it is to fuch that the Bride is directed, to wit, to keep near the shepherds tents, for being preserved from wandering, Song 1.9. And the more that the devil driveth to bear in prejudice at Ministers, and blast the Ordinances in their repute, the more are people to wreftle against that, and, in some respect, to be more blind and deaf to what may be seen and heard concerning Ministers faults, not so much for the Minifters respect, as their own good: Therefore the Apostle giveth this reason for his pressing of obedience and submission to Ministers, Heb. 13. 17. because the want of that, was not only prejudicial to the Minister, but unprofirable to themselves.

7. People would have an eye upon the way that faithful and eminently godly men have gone to Heaven by, before them; This is to follow the foot-sleps of the flock, Song 1.9. and the faith and patience of those that inherit the promises, Heb. 6, 12, and readi-

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ly we will find such to be most sober and serious, and farthest at a distance from novelty, curlosity, or alfurd opinions. And it's no little part of the boldnesse and impudency that often accompanieth new deficions, that they generally condemn the generation of Gods People, as if no way were to Heaven but by their vain inventions, this will be no little stick to a tender mind, at once to condemn the Religion and practice of such a cloud of witnesses.

8. They would be careful when they hear others questioning things, or expressing their prejudice at Ministers, Ordinances, or established Truths, to endeavour the present stopping of the same, and not to softer any thing of that kind by moving new doubts, suspicions, or giving new grounds of jealousie against Ministers or others, but rather would gravely and

wifely endeavour the removing of the fame,

9. They would then be much and ferious in the exercise of christian fellowship, observing or confidering one another, provoking one another, as the word is, Heb. 10. 24. and 3. 12, 13. taking heed, left there be amongst them an evil heart of unbelief, and left any of them be hardened: but, exhort (faith he) one another daily, as the remedy of that. There is no time wherein christian fellowship is more called. for, and wherein it may be more profitable, than at fuch a time, if it be rightly ordered and managed : I fay, rightly ordered and managed; for, often the pretext of christian followship is abused to the hatching and propagating of the most absurd opinions, when people turn light and frothy, taking up their time with vain janglings and diverting from the main feope, to wir, edification. These things are indeed to be fhunned, but christian fellowship is nor to be difclaimed, but wifely to be ordered in respect of the persons with whom, and occasions upon which it is used, and, in respect of the matter and duries infilted on, which is to be the confirming of themselves on fome truth, faithful freedom in admonishing one and other of what is wrong, ferious endeavour to keep repentance,

repentance, humility, felf-denial, and the like graces, fresh; These and such like things are good and profitable to men, when gravely, fingly, faithfully, ten-

derly and inoffensively followed.

In respect of persons infected, the peoples duty may what is be considered in these steps, 1. As they are to be af- their duty fected with their fault, and to pray for their recovery. in reference 2. As they have occasion, to testifie their dislike of to the pertheir way. 3. Such as are noted or known to be fons infeinstrumental in the carrying on of novelties, ought by sted, and if all means to be shunned. As, 1. their company and they ought fellowship is to be avoided, Rom. 16. 17, 18. Men to refrain are to beware of them, Matth. 7. Philip. 2. 2. Se- from their condly. They are not to receive such into their house, company. nor to give them a falutation, or bid them God-speed, 3 Epistle of John, ver. 10. They are to have no company with them, 2 Theff. 3. 14. We conceive there is no duty that is more preffingly urged upon the People of God, both in the Old and New Testament, as may be clear by confidering, not only the fore-cited places, but many other places of Scripture, especially that place, Provi 19. 27. Ceafe, my fon, to hear the instruction [that causeth] to erre from the words of knowledge, And there is this double reason for it, 1. There is no thing conduceth more to preserve those that are intire; For, it is hard to walk upon fire, and not be burnt, Prov. 7.27, 28. and the experience of not a few confirmeth this; for, many had not declined, had they keeped distance even from the garments that were so defiled and infected; and it's a hearing of such in-Atruction that caufeth to erre from the way of understanding. 2. There is nothing more useful to con-Fincethe persons infected, and to make them ashawhich is another reason why the Lord doth command this. And we may adde, that there is nothing that doth more evidence respect to God, and revenening of Him; and nothing that is more becom-10g a finner; that is fentible that he hath corruption, than that he standeth in aw to come near a seen tentation; For, God is jealous, and will not abide mens hazard-

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hazarding of themselves to be carried a whoring from Him: and men are not free of corruption, and fo readily are capable of what is corrupt. It may be that people do think that there is no ill and hazard in trying any thing, that fo, proving all things, they may hold fast what is good; and also, that it may be Ministers fearing the diminshing of their own particular respect, that doth make them presse this, and that it proceedeth from their carnal passion; But such would confider.

1. If our bleffed Lord Jefus, and His Apoftles, did restrain people from any due liberty, when they exprefly prohibit their companying with such, and hearing of such, especially where it is done purposely; usually and deliberately. And, we suppose, that there is scarce a direction in reference to any particular in the Word more frequently, weightily, and peremptorily pressed than this, as the places alleaged do

clear.

2. They may confider, if our bleffed Lord Jefus, or the Apostles, had any sear of losing their respect, or of inability to maintain their point against any Seducers; yet do they presse this themselves and command and charge other Ministers after them, to presse

this also upon their hearers.

3. They would confider, if these (to wit, our blessed Lord and the Apostles) did foster carnal passion, whileas yet they so pressed the people, and did reprove the suffering of such to continue in fellowship; Yea also, they did so practise it themselves, the Churchhistory recordeth, that the Apostle John having entered a Bath, where the heretick Cerinthus was, he did immediatly in haft go out, professing fear to be ruined with him, if he should continue under the same roof.

4. They would confider, if the meaning of fuch places, as, Prove all things. Try the spirits, be such as necessitates folks to give hearing unto every novelty? For, 1. that is not possible, that every person should enquire and put to trial every errour and every opinion.

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nion. 2. The people are not in capacity to do fo. 3. This directly croffeth the letter and scope of the former precepts, which were given even then, when this command, of proving all things, was given. It must be understood therefore, as agreeing therewith, and to point out that no doctrine should be admitted without proof, upon the trust of any bearer, but ought to be tried, if it be the Word of God, as the Bereans did, Ast. 17. but it doth not allow them positively to try every thing, especially how grosse soever it be, without trial, though it command them not to admit any thing without proof

any thing without proof.

Further, a main part of the peoples duty is to concur in their places, for countenancing and adding weight unto the respective Sentences, and steps, which are called-for from Ministers in their stations: As, 1. to contribute what clearnesse they can for the discovery and trial of luch persons. 2. To add their testimony to the truth, and thereby to make the means of conviction the more weighty to them. 3. By evidencing of their diflike of the persons obstinacy, and their acknowledgement of the justice and necesfity of drawing forth further Sentences against them. 4. In fhunning of their company, abstaining from familiarity, and otherwayes, to expresse their indignation against their way. 5. In carrying to them accordingly as they are Sentenced, that so they may ratifie the same, and in their place, endeavour the making of it weighty, and effectual upon the persons that thereby, they being made ashamed, may the more readily be humbled, and turned there from. And people are by all means to fhun such familiarity, especially with Excomunicate persons, as may lessen the weight of their Sentence, or mar their being ashamed, which indeed will make people guilty of despising the Ordinance of Christ, and obstructing the fruit thereof unto a brother, and also make themselves obnoxious to Centure, as being scandalous by so doing.

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CHAP. XVI.

what further duty is required of private Professors towards Hereticks that are cut off.

If it be asked, What duty further is called-for from private persons towards person cut off?

Answ. I suppose these things are called-for,

1. Abstinence from unnecessary civil sellowship, as, not to frequent their company, to visit them, to dine or sup with them, or to have them dining or suppring with us, or to use such familiarity in such things, as useth to be with others, or possibly hath been with them: So it is, 1 cor. 5. and it is no lesse the peoples duty to carry so, that it may be a mean for their edification, than proportionally it is the Mi-

nisters dury to instruct, passe Sentnee, &c.

2. Their would be an abstinence from Christian sellowship, that is, we would not pray with them, read or confer of spiritual purposes, (purposly at least) nor do any such thing that belongeth to Christian-communion, that is, to reject him in that sense from Christian sellowship, and to account him as an heathen man or publican. In this respect, we cannot walk with an excommunicate man, as we may walk with other Christians; And, in the first respect, we cannot walk with them, as we may walk with other heathens, that, it may be, are guilty of as grosse fins upon the matter; for, the Word of the Lord, putteth this difference expressly between them and these who are simply heathens, 1 cor. 5.

3. Yet even then prayer may be made for them; for, excommunication is no evidence, that a person hath sinned the sin against the holy Ghost; or, that their sin is a sin unto death, and their necessities, is they be in want, may and should be supplied, because they are men, and it is natural to supply such; they may behelped also against unjust violence, or from any personal hazard, if they fall in it; and as occasion

ffereth.

offereth, folks may give a weighty ferious word of admonition unto them, and such like, because by such means, the end of the Sentence and its weight are furthered, and not weakened.

4. These that are in natural relations ought to walk in the duties of them, as Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Magistrates and Subjects, &c. for, what nature bindeth, the Church

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5. Men may follow civil businesse, as paying or exacting payment of debts, buying or selling, and may walk in such things as are requisit for humane sellow-ship and society, because, though Church Gensures be to humble & shame men, by bearing in on them their sinfulnesse, yet it is not to undo them, and simply to

take away a being from them.

6. Yet all these things would be done with them in fuch a manner, As, I. the persons may shew their indignation at their way, even when they expresse tendernelle to their perions. 2 It would be done in a different manner from what ufeth to be with others, not under such a Sentence, that so they may bear out their respect to the Sentence, even when they shew respect to them. Therefore, there would not be such frequencie in medling with fuch perfors, nor would it be with familiarity or many words, and long difcourses to other purposes, nor with laughing, and with fuch chearfulnefle, intimacie or complacencie, as is used with others. But, in a word, the bufinesse would be done, and other things abstained from. 3. When, what is necessary is past, except it be on necessity, folks would not eat or drink with them at the time of doing their businesse, or after the closing of the fame; because that doth not necessarily belong to them as men, and by so doing, the due distance would not be keeped; and this is the great practick, to carry to them as the weight of the Sentence be not lesened, nor they prejudged of what otherwayes is necessary to their being, but that so every opportunity may, be taken, whereby their edification may be advanced. 26 De Tf.

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If what is before faid, be confidered, We suppose there will be no great need to add arguments to provoke either Ministers or others to be zealous in prosecuting their respective duties; Yet these few confiderations may be taken notice of, and pondered to this purpole,

Some Confiderations Ministers to the faithful discharge

oftheir the forementioned particulars

1. That scarcely hath delusion, though never to groffe, ever broken in into a Church, and for a time to provoke been forborn, but it hath carried away many therewith, and hath proven exceedingly inductive to much and others fin, offence, reproach, division, bitternesse and ills of all forts into the Church of Christ: Very little acquaintance with the Hiftory of the Church, will put this out

2. Confider that this spirit of delusion, is in a speduty in all cial manner fore-prophefied of, to have a great reviving and strength in the latter dayes; it is faid, I Tim. 4. 1. That the Spirit speaketh expresty, That in the last times, some shall depart from the faith: And why is that expresty added, but to give warning the more clearly, that men may be at their duty? Again, 2 Tim. 3. I. This know, that in the last dayes, perillous times thall come. It is the observation of a holy and learned man, that in this place, it is the last dayes; in the former, the last times, as if this did relate to a time nearer the end of the world: and so the first looketh to the Popish superstitions and abominations, (and indeed, the nature of the Doctrines there reproved. doth feem to favour this (and this last place doth relate to the groffe delufions, that under the pretext of the form of godlineffe, were to fucceed to thefe; And therefore men, according to their places, ought in these times to be so much the more watchful and zealous, seing the Trumpet hath given so distinct a

3. The dreadful effects which such ills necessarily bring with them, may be confidered; it is not ruine to bodies or estates, but to souls; it is not simply to fin, and to permit that ; but is rebellion; and which is more, It is to teach rebellion, and to carry on the fame

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with a high hand against God; and what will flir zeal for God, or what will waken love to, and sympathic with the souls of others, if this do not?

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4. It would be confidered, how often zeal, diff. gence and faithfulnesse of men in their feveral places (as hath been laid down) have proved exceeding helpful for preventing and reftraining the growth of fuch evils, fo that thereby fuch a floud hath been dryed up as it is Rev. 12. which otherwayes might have drowned the Woman and her feed; and, Matth, 12. it is marked, that such tares are fown and toring up, not while men are watchful and diligent, but while they fleep and are defective in their duty, ver. 25. for, diligence in the use of means bath the bleffing promifed which others cannot expect; and if wrath be come to such an height, as the Lord will not be intreated in that matter, yet the perfon that is diligent may look for his own foul for a prey, and to be kept on his feet in the midft of tentations.

5. It may be a provocation to humility and watchfulnelle, to confider how great men have been carried away with the most vile delusions: the Church of corinth did abound in most eminent gifts, yet corrupt teachers wanted not influence upon them. The Church of Galatia hath been most singularly zealous and tender, yet what an height delution came to amongst them, is evident, so that they were bewitched therewith, Galat. 3. 1. In Church-history also it is evident, that most eminent men have been carried away with the vainest delusions: that great Light, Tertullian, became tainted exceedingly with the delufions of the Montanifts: and after-times have letten us see, that the eminentest of men are capable of defection; and even Stars are often made to fall from heaven by fuch ftorms.

6. It is dreadful also to confider how difficultly men are recovered from these delusions. It's a rare thing to find in Scripture, or in History, any observable recovery of a person that hath slipped in this kind.

Somerimes

Sometimes indeed persons, that three it fear have been brought to deny Christ, or to countenance Idolatry in a particular act, are marked with much tendernesse and satisfaction to acknowledge their falling, and to abandon it; for, often such a failing is the fruit of some surprizal, and is of instructly, but the recovery of a person, who hath with a kind of deliberation drunken-in errour and rejected convictions, is a most rare thing, and hath a peradventure added thereto, 2 Tim. 2. 23. (as was formerly marked) which will not readily be found in any other case; yea, often such persons do wax worse and worse, and one delusion draweth-on another till it come to the greatest height of absurdity.

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Concerning Scandalous Divisions.

the days with the mon wie delifions: the Chire

How berefie, febifm and division differ, together with the several hinds of division.

Aving now come this length, there is one

thing of nigh concernment to what is, past, which possibly might be useful to be enquired into, Concerning such scandals as cannot be called in the former sense doctrinal, nor yet personal; because there may be puricy in the one, and regularity and orderlinesse in the other respect, and yet actually there may be a scandal and an offence or occasion of stumbling lying in the way of many, and that is, by schisses and devisions in the Church, or amongst the people of God. This we conselle is no lesse difficult to speak to, than any of the former.

The intro-

for for born sides, and the fide from whence the offence rifeth, is not to eafily difcernable, which maketh, that we are the more unwilling and leffe confident to undertake to fpeak any thing in reference thereto : Yer feing we have in providence been led to the former purpoles, without any previous defign; and now. having this occurring to us, before we close, we fhall endeavour shortly to speak a word in reference thereto, in a general abstracted manner, without descending to any particulars, which may be dangerous to be touched upon; but shall give some general hints concerning the same, which we are induced unto upon their confiderations,

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and hurtful to the Chutch, as either feandals in pra- and burtflice or doctrine are. 2. Because the Word of God fulneffe of hath as fully discovered and abundantly condemned divisions! the offensivenesse of this, as of any of the former. 2. Because there is such a connexion amongst these forts of scandals, that often one is not without the other. Hence we fee, 1. that contention and offences and the wo that followeth them, are joyned together. Matth. 18. 1, 2, 3, &c. 2. Divisions and corrupt doctrine, or herefies, are knit together, I Cor. 11. 18. 19. lo that feldom there is corrupt doctrine, but it both division with it; and never is division, but it hath offence, As in the Epistles to these of Corinth and Galatia is clear: Hence dogs and evil workers. that is, the spreaders of corrupt doctrine, are also called the concision, Phil. 3. 1, 2, &c. and in experience we often find, that a spirit of division waiteth upon delution, and oftentimes doth take up and prevail, even over those who have been preserved from the delution; As in a great florm, some places have great and dreadful blafts and drops, who yet may be keeped free from the violence of the tempest; Even fo, this deluge of errour, hath showrs of divisions waiting upon it, which often may affect these

who are preferred from the violence of delufion it

1. Because such divisions are as really scandatons The scandal

this duth not imperimently follow apon the furnism former cases, is palpably descrive, especially actuely a cime, when there is no leffe cante to observe this evil than any of the former. This being, as to them in fome respect a cause that bringerh them forth and for ftereth them, and, in some respect, an effect which necessarily and naturally followeth upon them: forel divisions breed both scandals in practice and doctrine And again, fcandal in thefe, doth breed and entertain divitions.

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2: What we would fay fhall be drawn to thefe four heads. T. To confider what division is, or of what fore it is, which is properly to be spoken of here. 2. What the treatife are the causes which do breed and foster the fame. 2. What are the evil effects which ordinarily flows from it. 4. What may be thought to be duty in reference to fuch a time, and what may be looked upon assuitable remedies of such a diffemper. The at morning

For the first, We take it for granted, that there is fuch a thing as division in the Church ; which is not to be looked upon as any new or ftrange thing; for, the Scripture maketh it clear, and the Hiltory of the Church putteth it out of question : Concerning which

we may premit these few things, and a sold of mode

That the division which is intended here is not every contest, and alienation of mind, and differences of practice incident to men; but that which is prod per to the Church concerning Church affairs, and for is to be diffinguished from civil debates and contential ons. We would advert also that there may be Church differences that fall not under the charge of Scandal, as when in fome things, men of confedence are of different judgements, yet carry it without any! offence or breach of charity; Or, when in fome pradices there is diverfity with forbearance, as was in Policarous dayes, and the time of maneus about Eafter matters) Thefe we fpeak not unto me. Alla though fomerimes titles and expressions may be aid Bromences, as in Fraget, Word and Secraments

more generally and promifereally; yet, in this dif-cause, we would distinguish between these three, Hershe, Schiffe and Division, without respect to what en thele three. other wayes wieth to be done. the state of the s

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And, first. Herefie, le some errour in doctrine, and What berethat especially in fundamental doctrine, followed he is. with pertinacie, and endeavour to propagate the fame. Again, Schifm may be where no herefie in doctrine is, but is a breaking of the union of the Church, and that communion which ought to be amongst the Members thereof, and is either in Government or Worthio. As, first, in Government. when the common Government, whereto all ought to besitble &, is rent, and a Government distinct, fer up. This may be, either when the Government is altered: as, Suppose some should set up Episcopacy in opposition to Presbytery, yet keeping still the fundation is, mental cruths; Or it may be, where the same Government is acknowledged, but there be difference concerning the persons to whom the power doth belong; fo, fometimes men have acknowledged Popery, vet followed diverse Popes; So often , Sectarles have not disclaimed Councils and Bishops, but have fetup, their own, and refused subjection to their ro whom is belonged. The first kind implies a dodrinal errour concerning Government; The fecond may confift with the same principles of Government. but differeth in the application of them, and becomch a fehilm, when men act accordingly in acknowledging diverse supream Independent Governments: Because so, when there ought to be but one Church. the cometh, as it were, two: and this is exclaimed against, and regrated by the Fathers, under the exprefion of creeting altere contra altere, that is alter against altar, whenas the Lord allowed but one. oven in reference to His own worthip. 2. Schifm may be in worship, that is, when, it may be, both the same Doctrine and Government is acknowledged vet there is not communion keeped in Churchordinances, as in Prayer, Word and Secraments;

What

but a separate way of going about these is followed. It seemen, that this was in part the schiif of the Corinthians (whatever was the rife thereof) that they had a divided way of communicating, and of going about other duties, and other Ordinances, as may be gathered from 1 Cor. 11.18, 19, 20, 21. with 33. This kind of schism hath been frequent in the Church, and hath flowed not so much from diffatisfaction with the Doctrine and Government thereof, as with the conflicution of the Members, or failings of the Governments. Thus it was in the case of the Novatians, Donatifts, Meletians, Cabari and others, of whom it is recorded, that their fault did not confift in ferring up any ffrange Doccrine, or in rejecting of the truth (at least at the first) but in breaking the band of communion, as Augustine hath it often; for, faith he, Schifmaticos facit non diversa fides fed communionis difrupta focietas, contra Fauftum, lib. 20. Again, he faith of the Donatifts, Ad Bonifac. Epift. 50. Nec de ipfa fide vertitur questio, fed de fola communione infælicicer litigant & contra unitatem Christi rebelles inimicitias, perverstate sui erroris, exercent. And this fort of schism doth often draw with it the former, there being no way to maintain this without the other. Of this schism there are many kinds, according to its feveral rifes and degrees; and alfo, according as it extendeth to the breaking of communion in whole, from Ordinances, or in part only from some, or in some Ordinances, as appeareth to have been in the Church of Corinth, where there hath nor been a total fchilm. though it hath been in that Ordinance of the Supper especially; and it is like also, that that schism hath been occasioned, because of the corruption of some members, with whom others have scared to communicate; and therefore have not tarried for them: for. the Apostle doth particularly condemn this, and exhort them to tarry one for another; and to attain this, he doth 'clear them of what was necessary for right partaking, to wit, the examining of themselves, ver. 28. and doth declare unto them, that who fo did ear unworthily.

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unworthily, and did not prepare himself, did ear and drink damnation; but to himself, and not to others: wherefore, saith he, ye need not be so anxiously solicitous how they be prepared, or of what fort they be that are with you, but examine your selves, and sarry one for another, that there be not a schissin amongst you. And this he speaketh, even when he hath been reproving drunkennesse among the Communicants, yet will he not admit that as an excuse; why private persons should Communicate separatedly, which was their practice. This was spoken of in the first

part.

This Schifm, however it be understood, hath ever proven exceeding hurtful to the Church, and hath been an inlet and nursery to the greatest errours; It is most pressingly condemned in the Scriptures, even with as great weight as corrupt doctrine and herefie are, and it is attributed to that fame original, to wir, the flesh, with witchcraft, idolarry, herefie, &c. Gal. 5.20. It hath ever been most weighting to faithful Ministers, most offensive to people of all forts, most advantageous to the enemies of the truth, and hath made the Church most vile and contemptible before the world, as we may fee in the fad complaints and writings of the Fathers, in reference to the Novatians, Donatifts and others of that kind : It hath also proven most dangerous to these who have been engaged therein, and often harh been a linare to bring on some spiritual desertion deadness of spirit, security, selfconfidence, or some other spiritual evils of that kind, or to dispose for receiving a more grosse tentation, as was formerly marked. Also, it may be observed, that fuch schisms have spread very suddenly in some places of the world, but have not been eafily removed; for, these schisms of the Novatians and Donatifts did trouble the Church for several generations, which might be enough to make men think the breach of unity, in that respect; to be no little evil, and to make them fearful to fall in the fame. But because every schism properly doth imply some errour T 3 in 4.

in doctrine, although it doth not arise from the same. cherefore we shall forbear to speak any thing particularly to this, because what hath been laid of errours in doctrine, may in part be applyed here: For, we will find, that fehilin doth imply one, or all of thole. 1. That fuch apprehended corruptions do either make such a society to be no Church, or communion with that Church in other Ordinances, to be unlawful because of such corruptions, or of such corrupt members. 2. That there may be a diffind ereded Church beside a Church, which yet may not be of community with that other Church. 3. fuch confequences, that either the Church of Christ in the earth is not one, (which truth of the unity of the Catholick visible Church, is the main ground of all Church-union and communion) Or, that that one Church may be of fuch heterogeneous or diffimilary parts, as the one of them ought not to have communion with the other; Or, at least this, that a person ought to seek his own fatisfaction and confolation, though to the prejudice and renting of the Church, and to the general offence and flumbling of all others; The fairest schism and separation, must imply one of these: for, it cannot be conceived , that otherwayes men would act fo directly, according to these principles, if they did not take them for granted.

It is to be adverted, that as there is an unjust schift, that is, a separation without any cause at all; so there is a rash and scandalous schift, that is, when it is beyond the ground given; or, when the ground given, is not such as will-warrant such a separation, Which may be, r. when the separation or schismis upon some occasion, which is indeed a defect in the Church, but not such as doth make communion therein sinsul, as that in Corinth. Or, 2: when, it may be, the schism is extended beyond the ground, that is, when suppose one could not communicate in the Lords Supper in such a Church, because of some sinsul cortuption in that Ordinance, if, upon that occasion, one should

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Separate from communion in all Ordinances, that were to exceed the ground given. Or, a. when no professed schism is owned; yet when really and indeed it is practifed, fo as men can neither justifie a schilm, or separation upon such a ground, nor yet altogether vindicate their practice from inferring the fame, in which respect, the schism and rent floweth from affection, or inclination, and not from well grounded light, or reason, and so cannot be but sash and unwarrantable. 4. It may be, in the manner, precipitant, when either means have not been used to remove that ground if it be just; or, when men so heighten some lesser desect in a Church by aggreging it with fuch circumstances, as may make it appear to themselves or others, a ground sufficient to bear and warrant separation; or, in such a way, to vent their diffarisfaction with things, or persons, as thereby to hurr the unity of the Church, or to occasion a rent, or divition, or schism in the same, when, it may be, others belide their intention may thus conclude. A Church so corrupted, &c. is not to be keeped communion with, (and, it may be, the proposition is found and so qualified, as it is acknowledged by all Divines) But this or that particular Church is such. This again, is offered to be made out by the too vehement aggravation of some leffer defect, which may feem to confirm that affumption: and in practice, it may be observed, that as some will lay down premisses concerning a schisin, who yet dare not act according to the conclusion, and actually separate, So others will keep the conclusion and actually separate in practice, who yet durft not in These absolutely maintain schism to be lawful upon such a ground. It is to be adverted, that schisms and divisions are so nigh in nature and names, that we may use instances for illustration of either promissuously.

The third word, is Division, which doth not at the first view differ from Schism; yet we do take it here as different, and to agree to such Divisions and Dissentions in the Church as are consistent with com-

munion both in Government and Worship, and have not a divided Government or Worship following them, as in the former case. Of such there are many inflances in Scripture and Church-hiftory, as we may observe by confidering these Diffinctions

What is Division.

thereof. 1. There is a Doctrinal Division, as when here meant the matter is not fundamental, nor yet is it pleadedby the word for as such to the breaking off of communion amongst thele that differ, yet possibly being a meer indifferent matter, is followed with too much eagerneffe, vehemency, bitternesse, &c. by these who owne the The leve-fame respectively. Thus contentions were hot in the primitive times for meats, and such things which were

ral kinds tbereof.

neither of themselves destructive to the foundation of Faith on either fide, at least in that time, and so were not hererical; nor did they break off communion in Church-ordinances, and fo were not schismarical; yet was the Church troubled therewith by division amongst her members. Of this fort are the divisions that may be amongst godly and orthodox men in some points of Truth, when they too vehemently preffe their own opinion to be received with a kind of necessity, or load the other with too many absurdities' beyond what will follow from the nature there-

2. There are some Divisions that may be called Practical, and do indeed imply some difference of opinion, but do also infer somewhat in practice: Of this fort was the division about Easter in primitive times before it came to a schism, some keeping one day, some another. And in after-times it abounded, when some acknowledged the ordination of such a Bishop, and others not; when some acknowledged the authority of such a Council, and others not, and fo had divided practices.

2. Some Divisions are betwixt particular men, fome have influence upon Churches, and are, as it were, one party against another. The first is more properly a difference, and may be betwirt eminently godly and zealous men, such as was betwixt Paul

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and Barnabas, Aft. 13: 39. and is called a contention. Such also we will find in Church history betwixt Augustine and Jerome, Chrysostom and Epiphaneus, which indeed hath a contention with it, and is the Lord prevent not, is apt to make parties, and to rent the Church; but the other, to wit, the acting of one party against another, as hath been seen in many Councils, and appeareth to have been amongst the Corinthians, when one adhered to one person, and one to another; This, I say, looketh like saction, and is

properly division.

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4. Division may be considered in all these respects as it is in judgement, or in affection, or in practice. It is in judgment, when they are not of the same mind, but have diverse apprehensions concerning Truths. 2. It is in affection, when upon that difference of judgment allenation followeth, whereby that love, and affection, and charity that one oweth to another, is somewhat cooled or discomposed. 2. It is in practice, when they speak and act differently and oppositly; as if it were an advantage to Truth for the one to croffe and undermine what the other doth: This distinction is clearly infinuated, 1. Cor. 1. 10. I befeech you, brethren, that there be no divisions amongst you; Which is branched-out in union in these three, to wir, speaking the same thing, that relateth to action; Of being perfectly joyned together in the same mind, that relateth to affection; And of being one in the same judgment, that relateth to opinion: which supposeth that there were divisions opposit to all these, which allo often go together.

negative, and are in the manner and circumstances of doing some duties. Thus men may differ and take diverte wayes, yet both of them be endeavouring the thriving of the work of the Gospel, and no way labouring to cross each other, or to make one another lesse weighty and successful. Thus Paul and Barrabas, after their contention, did indeed differ in their manner of prosecuting the work of the Gospel, yet both

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both of them did continue faithful therein, and netther of them did counterplot nor counteract to others. Again, some divisions are politive (to lay so) when men do not only differ from each other, but do oppose each other, and do not set themselves fingly to profecute the work, which possibly their opposit may be profecuting with them; but there is an endeavour to leften the authority and mar the actings of the other, and to engage men in the approbation of that particular wherein they do differ, which favoureth of division and faction properly, and is more hurre ful and intolerable, when as the first is more tolers able amongst men who have their infirmities; and it's like, that such were the divisions of corinth when there was an endeavour to cry up one, and down another.

6. Some are in dollrint, for difference of judgment, some are in government, for precedency; as sometimes was amongst the Disciples, a contest who should be greatest: which is not so much for Government abstractly, and considered in it self, or about what should be done, as it is for the persons who should be the governours and does thereof; as amongst the Disciples, it is not the question. What kind of government shall be? or, What should be the Governours duty? But, who should be chief and have

the main hand in ruling?

7. Sometimes Divisions are more stated and deeply rooted, when some way mens designs are crosse, though not in the main, yet in the manner of carrying them on. Sometimes again, they are more occasional, and arise from some particular act or circumstance, wherein men may differ, and may be when neither side draweth-on a division; So that particular of raking or not taking John Mark in the company, was the occasion of that contention and division betwixt Paul and Barnabas, Ast. 15. when otherwayes there was an harmony in the series and strain of their whole way.

8. Sometimes Divisions are betwirt godly and orthodox

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orthodox, men upon the one fide, and corrupt men upon the others as were the divisions of the Church with the Arian Hereticks, and others of that nature.
Sometimes again, they are amongst godly and orthodox men on both fides, and this is a main ingredient in, and aggravation of the scandal of Division, when it is amongst. Christ's own Disciples; and this is that which we would especially speak to: Concerning which we fay,

1. That there is such a thing incident to the Church Division as division amongst godly, able, and orthodox men, among the as betwixt Paul and Barnabas, Act. 15. The Disciples Godly. of Christ and the disciples of John; year oftentimes betwixt the Disciples of Christ amongst themselves. And afterward the inftances of Augustine and Jerome, Chrysoftom and Epiphaneus, with many others of later times, do demonstrat it. In the Old Testament we find Job and his friends keeping up a long dispute right sharply. And, Numb, 12. something is recorded of a division between Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

2. This Division may continue long, and come to It may cona great height, that is, it may be very fharp, although tinue long, it may be the rife thereof be smal; for, contentions and come are, as the letting out of maters, Prov. 12. 14. and to a great they often grow, even amongst good men, so as to height. provoke much sharpnesse against each other, and that with much confidence, as the inflances given do clear.

Though it be frequent to them to come to an height, yet they are not eafily removed, even amongst the best; This being true, Prov. 18. 19. That a brother offended, is barder to be won than a strong city, and that their contentions are as the bars of a castle, they are lo ffrongly rooted. Hence, we see, that there is no breaking off between Job and his friends, till the Lord interpole; there is no composing of the matter between Paul and Barnabas, but their contention continueth to bor, that they must separate; Neither is And not there any thing expressy recorded of their meeting to- easily regether again, although they had long been of most moved.

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infinate fellowship as nearest colleagues in the journeying and travelling in the Lords work, and tha appointed thereto, even by Himfelf extraordinarily Atts 13. It is recorded, that chryfoltame and Epioba. news did funder. To imbittored one at the other, that Epiphaneus did wish, That Chrylostome should not die a Bishop: He again did wish, That the other might not see his home, to wit, cyprus, to which he was then making his voyage; both which accordingly fell out: which is a dreadful inflance of this evil and looketh like the Lords making use of their passon, to figuific His displeasure against both their diftempers.

CHAP. II.

whence Divisions do arise, and how they are fostered and encreafed.

"His division doth frequently arise, and is con-I tinued upon very smal occasions; for, it is not ordinarily groffe herefies or palpable abominations, that do draw godly and learned men to fide in the defence the reof, but things of leffer concernment; which we will find to be fuch as thefe.

truths.

Parious ap 1. Some various and different apprehensions of prehensions truths, that are leffe fundamental, such as was the deof inferiour bates about meats, genealogies and other questions in the primitive times, concerning which, there was no little jangling even amongst good men; thus is it when Divines presse too hotly some truth, not simply necessary. It cannot be supponed, that all men who yet fee but in part should be of that same mind; and the Lord hath left some things, as it were, to be the matter of doubtful disputations, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 14. 1. and though there be truth upon the one fide of every debate, yet confidering that that is not alway cafily demonstrable, too peremptory deciding and preffing of fuch things, cannot but occafion Arile.

ometimes it floweth from the nifiake of some The mistale dispensations, and the suspecting of the successty and of some distinguity one of another; whereby sometimes men are pensations. engaged ere they wit to maintain their prejudice and to lay the leffe weight upon light holden forth by others, It was thus with Jobs friends, who, mif-interpreting Gods hand upon him, and concluding un-

charitably of his flate, are brought to maintain an unwarrantable Thefe for making out of their point.

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3. It may arise from different apprehensions about Different fome persons, or from a different manner of doing apprebenfithe same thing, or from the use-making of different ons about persons; As when one would have such a man to be some persons a Minister, another doth not think him worthy; and things. When one doth think such a man deserveth not to be a Minister, and another thinketh that he doth; when fuch different thoughts about persons, means or manper of doing things, (which are incident to the best of men) are followed with different actings accordingly, and none doth cede to another, then necessarily followeth contention and division; So Paul thought John Mark nor meet to be taken to the Miniflery again in their company, feing he had left them; Barnabas did think him meet and would have him, whereupon the contention and division followed. Often also, we find in the Church-history, that good men have divided upon this, that some would ordain such to be Presbyters or Bishops, whom others did not think worthy of that office; and that some would not condemn persons or writings, which others did condemn; for, learned men often think the condemning of a person or doctrine which is owned by them, or the refusing to condemn a perfon or doctrine which they do condemn, to be a reflection on them, and that therefore they are engaged to deal with such, as with the principal party: It is marked, that the rite of Chryfostome and Epiphaneus their difference, was, That Chrylostome did not fo go alongs in the condemning of Origen, and his writings as the other did; and that fome of the Glorgie

ferving the Lord, but their own bellies, Romes 60)

Heart burntbers.

ver. 16, 17.

4. It usually ariseth from secret grudges at being ines at the fleighted, or heart-burnings at anothers credit and credit of o- reputation beyond them, and fometimes indeed, not because of the fact done, but because such persons were the doers thereof, and one way or other fpringeth from the root of pride, envy, or emulation, which hath many branches whereby it venterh its malignant diffempering disposition in fundry shapes. It is indeed fad that fuch things should be amongst the Disciples of Christ, yet often we fee, that this, who should be the greatest, was a bone of contention among them, especially when some had evidenced their too great propeneffe and inclination to prefer themselves to others; This also had influence upon that muteny which Aaron and Miriam did ffir up against Moles, Numb. 12-and it is the Lords word by the wife mouth of Solomon, Only by pride cometh contention. with or light of the

Aggreging the infirmities of otbers-

much infifting on, and aggreging of the infirmities or opinions of others, and loadening and them with many fearful confequences to hath much influence upon this especially whereas words are wrested beside the intention and sense of

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e luch an humour thewerlifficie love and respect to me perfor, and by the namited the work, doch tend to hold him forth as odious ignorant, abfurd, or fome way despicable; which even good men, being but men, are not eafily brought to digeft. We fee this in Job's friends, who frequently carp at his expressions, and study to aggrege them. which indeed were not alway altogether excufable; ver their fcope (at least, in the work) was, to reprefeat them, and him much, more abfurd, than indeed they were. And this was in these debates between Augustine and Jerome, and usually is where such differences are as too many reproachful and bitter differences now in the Church, almost every where, do hold forth.

6. They are occasioned by a carnal and factious- A factious like pleading for, and vindicating even of Truth, vindicat-Often it is not the matter whereabout godly and ing of, learned men debate, that maketh division, for, there trath. may be difference where there is no division) but it is a carnal manner of profecuting either fide of the difference, even that fide whereon the truth doth lye, that doth engender the division; and often, we see men differing about greater points than others do, and yet carrying fo as it cannot be called Divition. It's marked, I Cor. 3. that some were for Paul, some for Apollos, some were for none but chrift; and yet this is counted a fide of the faction aswel as any of the other; not because being for Christ is wrong, but because that factiously they walked under that pretext; Which we may take up in these respects, I. When a man too peremptorily preffeth his light upon others, or upon a Church, in a matter that is not landamental, or necessary, which is condemned, Rom. 14:22. when men in thele debates keep not their. faith, or light, to themselves, but do trouble and drfred otherstherewith. 2. It is, when men too vehemestly prefle such a thing, as if the contrary thereof or those who maintain the same, were intolerable; and foin a fiery violent way feek to bear down that intention and lenie of

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Part 6

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Leaving the matter and falling upon reflections.

which is indeed an errour, though of infirmity. It is marked by fome that write Church-hiftory, and Auguftine is of that fame mind, That Stephanus, Bifhop of Rome, did more hurt to the Church by his too vehement opposing of cyprian's errour (which was, That those that were baptized by Hereticks, or Schismaticks, ought again to be baptized) because he did thereby hazard the dividing & renting of the Church, by retufing communion with fuch as were against him, than Cyprian did in his maintaining of his errour; Because, though it was still his opinion, he did meekly and condescendingly carry in it, with respect to the unity of the Church. 3. This is also, when things are followed with Sentences and Censures on the opposit opinion, and the abbetters thereof, as if it were a matter of Faith. It's known what influence those Sentences of Victor, Bishop of Rome, had upon renting of the Church, and stating that divisive distinction betwixt the East and west Church, and that for a matter of nothing, to wit, What day of the moneth precisely Easter was to be keeped; and he was for that sharply reproved, even by Iraneus, who was of that same judgment with him: And many fuch inflances are in History. 4. It is, when in the profecution of fuch things, men leave the matter, and fall on personal reflections, and become bitter in these respects, as to cast-up pride and arrogancy, hypocrifie, ignorance, herefie, or erroneousnelle, or some other personal fault, if any be known or imputed to them, or one way or other to fleight them and make them despicable: So Aaron and Miriam murmur against Moles, Numb. 12. that he had married an Ethiopian woman, that he seemed to sleight them, as if God had only spoken by him, and not by them also; Epiphaneus also did upbraid Chrysoftom with hypocrifie; Ferome hugely revileth Vigilantius, whose tepents feem to be as near truth as his are; foit was between Demetrins and Theophilus, when in the matter of fact, each giveth to other the lie. 5. It is, when the manner of carrying on a thing, is factious,

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endeavouring to make fides and par hand, and indirect dealing to engage others in their Engaging differences, and to ftir up men by fuch means against of others. others: It is like it was to in corinth , even amongst the people who adhered not to falle teachers; It is marked also in that vehement bitter contention that was between Jerome and Ruffinus, that he did endeayour by all means, to waken hatred against Feromes perion, and to defame his writings more than in any convincing way to make out his point; and yet all this arole from ferome his alleaging the other to be a favourer of Origens herefie, because he had translated some books of Origens, which was indeed condemned by others as being dangerous; yet leing Ruffinus did disclaim these errours, and deny that he approved them, there was no such ground to presse him with it; and this became the occasion of that irreconciliable hacred, which was never removed; in which also it is marked, that Jerome doth object to the other, obfourity, and harfanelle of ftile, adding withal many other fleighting expressions.

7. It may be by the imprudencie of fuch as have good affection: As, 1. expressing too much good liking of liking of some corrupt men, because they pretend some upon fairly: Thus the Church was divided in Phrygia for fair preten-Montanus, because some did too imprudently construct ces, well of him, as if indeed he and his Propheteffes had truly had the gift of prophecy; others again vehemently upbraided them for it. 2. It is when things are prefied unleasonably, or in an offensive manner, without respect to the manner of things if they be farished in the matter. There followed many divifions upon the back of the most famous Council. (which made Greg. Nazianzen to fay, He never defired to fee many Bishops together) and the Centuriators give this reason or occasion, Dum quidam fidem Nicevam imprudenter urgebant, alii eam acriter impugnabant.

Peremptori-8. Too much peremptorinelle where there may be nels withsome condescending, hath much hand in this; when out condemen fcending.

Too much

men become not all thirts (in far as in a study) unreothers. It is marked to the Church-history. That fometimes too tenacious adhering unto Canom and Gouncils, by fome who would not condefeed in a fyllable, when others did condemn the master, bathbeen in this respect prejudicials. Such was the cause of the schilm betwike the East and well Church, and particularly the tenacious adhering in all things, even as to the very manner, to the Gonnell of Chalacters (which was indeed a famous and orthodox Council in the matter.) The former instance cleareth this also.

Dissatisfaction about some persons

9. Sometimes this doth come from differisfaction in some particulars of Government, as when some have been displeased that such and such men, formerly cast out, should have been again admitted to communion; or that a person, cast out of communion in one place, hard been admitted in another; This is frequent, as after instances may clear.

Mutual encroachment. 10. It is often occasioned by the encroachment of one upon another in the exercise of their power, as to preach, ordain, and such like, within the bounds after others beside, or without their knowledge, or against their will.

Meddling in extrinfick things.

11. It hath fometimes arisen from the Churches meddling in extrinsick or unnecessary things; and seldome Church-men have been too much taken up and occupied about such things, but it hathhad such a consequent : As when they are too much raken up about ceremonies and things not commanded, as Eafter was; or about indifferent things, as the prefcribing of torms in every thing, and fuch like; Or, about precedency in Government, and what might conduce to the external fplendor of the Church in immunities, priviledges, fabricks, dorations, &c. whereof instances are very many. Or, when Churchmen have become too pragmatick in civil things, or affairs of the world, thereby to carry on a temporal grandour in the spiritual Kingdom of Christ; which was often the rife and occasion of difference amought the Aposiles; and although there was scarce accesse to this

this occasion in respect of practice while Magistrates were heathers, yet in after times; this is evident; and sundry divisions followed upon such occasions, as the approving or condemning of such and such an Emperous Election; the transferring of the Empire from East to West, or from one Family to another.

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12. New manner of expressions, or new moulds of Novelty of the Doctrine of the Gospel, different from what hath expressions been formerly delivered, have given occasion to this; and notithat is, when there is either a new form of lpeaking, ons. and an affectation of novelty in words, different from the form of found words which Ministers ought to hold fast; or, when things are so proposed, as if all former moulds had been defective, and all other Divines in their Preaching and Writings were nothing to fuch. It feemeth that this newfapgleneffe of fpeech had no lesse influence in dividing the Church of Corinth and begetting factions therein, than the diversity that was in the matter, wherein they are not fo generally found guilty, as being carried away with errour. as, of being itched with a humane kind of eloquence in the manner of Preaching. This same also may be in Writings, and indeed when some cry up one manner or mould, and some others the contrary, it may breed fiding and division, even as well as diversity of Dodrine may do. And it is not for nought that the Lord hath commanded fimplicity in the manner, and the holding fast of the form of souna words, even as he hath commanded foundnesse in the matter; and oftentimes there doth arise no lesse testinesse or itching amongst people, nor leffe emulation amongst Ministers, from the one than from the other.

CHAP. III.

The beight of evil that division bringeth.

Having now seen a little the rises of this evil, we may look to the height it hath come to V 2 from

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Heat and from such beginnings: which we may confider in contention, these steps. I. It engendereth heat, firste and contention; and in that respect, maketh men carnal, 1 Cor. 3. 2. It breedeth alienation in affection, and

separateth these in fellowship that have been most in-Alienation timate, as if their companying together had loft that tweetnesse and refreshfulnesse that sometimes it had, and thereby even their Christian communion is interrupted; both those may be seen in that frange and hot contention, which came to this height betwixt Paul and Barnabas, Act. 15. 3. It breedeth jealoufie and suspicion of one anothers actions and intentions, yea, it may be, of the fincerity of their state: it breedeth envy at one anothers prosperity and re-

spect, and maketh them leffe weighted with any

crosse or adversity that the other falleth into. Paul

is suspected, not only by the false teachers, but even

Fealonfie.

Virulent expressions.

by the professors, to be an enemy to them, and not to be fingle in his defignes amongst them: some have counted others hypocrites, as is before mirked. 4. It bringeth forth violent and virulent expressions, and reflections upon each other, and greater heat almost is not to be found then amongst differing Divines, that yet do aggree in the main. It is a wonder to read some of the expressions that are betwixt Fereme and Ruffin, and betwixt Demetrius Bishop of Alexandria, and Theophilus Bishop of Jerusalem, with many others; or to confider the fad regrates that. Basilius, Gregorius Nazeanzenus, and others, have of these differences; something may be seen of it in the instance of Job and his friends. And what there is for the present amongst Orthodox Divines abroad, and in this Island, I fear, out of honour to the men, to mention them; yer I suppose such things may be read in the Prefaces and Writings of the most eminent Divines, as may make the hearts of all to loath fuch divisions. 5. It hath come to that height, as Personal not to spare to publish even personal resightions; yea

reflections.

fometimes, it hath come to that, that men have condem ned deeds in others, after such begun differences, which

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formerly they did highly commend in them; (thus, their estimation & construction of their actions, doth ebb and flow according to their estimation of their persons) It is marked of Demetrius of Alexandria, that whiles he and Origer did continue in fellowship. he was a great commender of that deed of Origin's to wit, his gelding of himself while he was young; vet after difference arole betwixt them . upon very mean grounds, (Origen not being come to his groffenesse) he did most vehemently object that to him in Imprecatihis Writings. 6. Often it hath come that length, that ons and inthey have imprecated evil to one another, as in the fligation of instance of chrysostom and Epiphanius; sometimes they have informed and most vehemently instigated civil Powers against one another, that they might procure their deposition, banishment, and such like, as Ruffinus did against Ferome, the Clergie at Antioch against Flavianus, and some at constineple, particularly Severianus, did ftir up the Emperour against Chryfostom. 7. Also it hath been followed in Councels and Sy- Sharp cennods by the Sentences of Deposition and Excommu- sures innication, as was frequent in the case of that debate flitted. about Eafter, and in that debate betwixt Stephanus and Cyprian; Tertullian also was Sentenced upon a prejudice, without just ground; so was chrysostome deposed even by Bishops that were not heterodox; and many others. 8. It hath extended to divide Churches Renting of although it began amongst Ministers, and hath come whole to that height, that they have withdrawn from the Churches. communion of one another, and have chosen different Bishops and Ministers without communion one with another, or without dependence one upon another, and yet neither of them have been Hereticks, nor professed Schismaticks, but because of some disfacisfaction, it may be, with the person, or ordination of luch a Minister; or upon some mistake of a particular act of a Councel, even when both did acknowledge the same, as particularly is marked to have been betwixt Eustachius of Antioch, and Eusebius of Pamphilia; and again at Antioch in the case of Mi-

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hich erly.

Furious madness of Divines.

Diversion
of them
from their
main work.

letus and Paulinus a and again berwixt Flavianus and others: which is marked to be in the fourth Century. o. It bath extended to great hear and furle beven amonest the followers of each other; whereby much jealousie hear and diffention hath been occasioned. to In both those there hath been such a servour, and as it were fury; that there hath been no uptaking nor removing of the fame: And although we find difference to have arisen from little, even amongst good men, ver often we will find that most difficultly it hath been removed o but for many generations it hath continued when the first authors have been away, and that with very great heat, as almost in all the inflances given , fo that, that fweet and moderate Divine Melanethon, did usually call the difference of Divines rabies Theologorum, and at his death did bleffe himfelf. that amongst other fins and mileries he was to be fred from this rabies or furle of Divines, which was evermore fadder to him than any opposition of open adverfarles. IT. Ulually, it hath diverted most ferious Divines, both from the preffing of piery, and reproving of vice; as also from mainraining of truth against open adversaries, and the pursuing of their errours. Augustine doth complain of this to ferome , and doth for this end, as it were. crave a ceffation; and it cannot be otherwayes, for fuch debates do not profit these that are occupied therein. Heb. 12. ver. 9. and when mens edge is hot and tharp against others in such particular differences, it cannot but cool and blunt them in more weighty things, and is no little part of the devils subtiley to make way for errour and profanitie, thus to entangle Ministers. Which occasion he hath ever taken to fow rares, which that great Father and Divine Balilius doth condole to this purpose, That while there. was concord in every occupation, only in the Church and amongst Ministers there was diffention, and that to hor, that no commiseration of the Flock, which was fer upon, and drawn away by perverse men, was prevalent with them, to abstain from such differences.

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there high been no confiderable difference upon the matter at the first, ver notwithstanding it hath grown and come to a height and that in respect both of Schiff and herefie; And it is tare to find in Hiftory that a division hath continued long, but it hath turned

and berefee following division.

to feparation in communion, and a Schiffn; and again, Schilm hath not continued long, but it hath brought forth herelie, for divided practices lead men to lay down and maintain fuel principles as may defend them, and the band of unity being broken, there is no flay or hold, because, as that forenamed Father Bafilius faith, men take on them then to speak, write,

and does they please. 13. Although sometimes the Commonly fault of division may be more on one side than ano- both sides

ther, yet feldom is any fide free, at least, in the man-faultie, ner of profecution, and therefore often it turneth in though not the close to the hurt of both, and the one fide becomes equally. more schismarical and erropeous, at least, in many of their members, as fell out in the case of the Novatians, and Donatifts. The other fide again, have often become more cold and fecure in the practice of holines, carnal and formal in purfuing ceremonies and external things, with leffe affection and life in the main, because the edge of their zeal was bended toward these differences; and generally people have been flumbled and offended by them; and by the miscarriage of some affectionate persons, men more formal and nor very zealous in the main thing, have come to have more weight and Iway in the Government of the Church; and thus we see that after these hot debates that were in the Church about leffer things, schisms and herefies grew up on the one fide; lukewarmnelle, formality, and inclination to ceremonies, and a for-

Divison find men fadly regrate thefe, yet was there alwayes bardly caa difficulty to get them removed; there being often a red.

much !

mal lazie way of worship, did grow up and increase

in the Church, upon the other fide. 14. Though we

kind of inconfideratnesse whereby the publick good

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much by particular inclination and affection, and to have come to have whome formerly they praised, and to praife, whom formerly, they hated; by which the Ordinances have become weightleffe to all; and the Ministers, who fometimes were counted a gazing, a reproach, and the off-feouring of all men because of afflictions, have become much more despicable begaule of their own intestine divisions, as one of the Fathers, doth pathetically exposulate for the diffentions of his time, writing to Nazeanzen.

and the rand of unity peing broken, there

The causes why Division usually cometh to so great an unit of distingt may be more on one fide thatthe

Divisions usually come to such a height, the dances and are to difficultly removed, even amongst men that are affectioned in the work of Christ, and sherwayes found, zealous, and fober; which is indeed firange, especially considering, that they do often (ce the evil, regrate it, and professe their defire of a remedy themselves? In answering to this, we are to look, t. to the Lords loveraign hand even in this. 2. To what accession there is to it from those that 2. To some occasional accidental causes that concur therein. 4. We may confider the ftrength of the tentation in respect of some other circumflances.

The foveraignty of God trying good and bad.

Chaftizing alfo and puni bing.

1. That the Lord hath a Soveraign hand therein, cannot be denied, and that in these two respects, not to insift in all, I. As, it is a trial whereby both mens foundnesse and unfoundnesse have occasion to be manifested; This is afferted, I Cor. 11. as a reafon of the necessity of schisms and divisions, as may be gathered by comparing, ver. 18, with 19. Bur this we infift not on. 2. The Lord hath a judicial hand in it, that is, as He ordereth divisions for the just chaftisement and punishment of some, even as was

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formerly (aid of herefies and delutions; and to this purpose, we may confider that we which flowerth from offences unto the world, to relate especially unto divisions amongs Church-officers, as the subjoyning thereof to the contention amongst the Apostles doth evince; and in the nature of it, and in respect of the confequents that follow thereon, It is indeed a mo, and a very great mo unto the world and an evidence of the Lords displeasure; when thus in His anger, divisions come amongst Ministers or People, as it is, Lam. 4. 16. Which we will find true in thefe respecks. 1. It lookerh angry like against Ministers : for, thereby they become despicable, the Lords countenance and presence seemeth to be withdrawn, and much carnalnesse of frame, and many other evils fleal in; which do both eat up much of that inward livelinesse which otherwayes they might have, and also discompose that tranquillity and composednesse of mind, which love and unity entertain, and doth propole Ministers unto people as mendestitute of that badge, whereby they may be known to be the Lords Disciples, to wit, love to one another. 2. It is often a Yea place. great snare to many carnal Professors; for, thereby ing the some are hardned in profanity, and become Atheists, world. as if all that is spoken by Ministers concerning Religion, were not to be believed; Therefore the Lord prayeth for unity, and against differences amongst His Disciples, for this cause, That the world might believe that Christ was sent by God, and that these are loved of him, John 17. 21, 23. which importerh, that this plague of Atheism followethin the world upon such divisions. Again, others are stumbled so, as they caft at the Truth preached by them, and thereby become a prey to be carried about with every wind of doctrine; for preventing of which, Mini- Division fters, and union among Ministers are required, Eph. burdens 4. 1, 2, 3. with 11, 12, 13, 14. 3. It becometh an the godly. burden, grief and offence to the weak, such divisi- Hardeneth on being a main stumbling-block to the little ones that the adbelieve, Matth. 18. 1, and 6, 4. It proveth a great versaries of

con- the truth.

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confirmation and probad of hardening to the adversaries of the truth, who are thereby exceedingly hardned, and brought to applaud themselves in their own way, as if such divided inflruments could not be of the one body, the Church, which is guided by one Spirita And this was cast up by heathers in the primitive times, as we may find by the apologies of many of the Fathers; and the fame way hath been followed by Antichrift and his followers unto this day; they infult in nothing more than the divisions of the Orthodox. and are more proud of nothing than their pretended unity, which they make a mark of the true Church. And when all thele are confidered , we suppose, it toay be evident that fuch divisions are when they are. a great plauge unto the Church, and may juffly be called a mo unto the world.

characters of judicial division.

We need novinfift upon characters of a judiciallike division, seing hardly there is division in a Church, but it is judicial in some part; Yet these things may be confidered to this purpose, 1. When the division is amongst the more eminent and godly men, as amongst the Disciples. 2. If the matter be light comparatively for which the difference is keeped up, as Augustine calleth that with some Donatists, parva diffentio, as to the matter or occasion, which was yet great in its effects, Epift. 202. 2. If it be for dominion, or preheminence, or such things as may look carnal like before men , like that, Matth. 18. 1, &c. Or, 4. if the manner of following it be carnal, or irrational-like without that respective tendernesse of edification and offence, which ratiopally might be expected from fuch men. there are many palpable convincing reasons, and that in respect of the particular time and case, which might draw men from such divisions. Or, 6. when fometimes healing is effayed, and beyond probable reasons and expectation, it doth break off and turn worse, when it appeared to be near a close. 7. When it spreadeth, and cometh to occupy and take up Profellors, it may be, beyond many more concerning things.

things. This efpecially is differnable, when the division ariseth suddenly upon the back of a great calm, and after such fins as may procure the interrupting thereof, and when it cometh, in an unexpected way, from fuch persons, and upon such an occasion, as, it may be, none could have looked-for, or thought of when it is under afflictions, and other croffes and reproaches, as the lews divisions were, even when befieged by the Romans, and when under them, as 70sephus writeth. These and such like may evidence somewhat to be judioial therein. Because, 1. It doth fo further what is penal the more in all the former respects, and it cannot but have such effects. 2. Because there being no other probable reason how ordinarily such a thing may come to passe, the Lords hand is to be acknowledged therein so much the more, when even His Servants are drunken but not with wine, and He hath poured upon them the spirit of deep fleep, and covered even the Prophets & Seers therewith, as the word is, Ifa. 29.9, 10. and when they are as fo many wild bulls caught in a ner, ful of the fury of the Lord, and of the rebuke of their God, as it is, Ifa. st. ver. 20. Whereby it cometh to paffe, that neither one fort or other can particularly understand the dury called-for in reference to their healing, more than if all visions, and directions concerning the same were fealed up, as, Ifa. 29. ver. 10, 11. and Ifa. 59. 10. And none of all Zions fons are in capacity to take her by the hand, Ifa, 51. 18. 2. Befides these two, the Lord sometimes hath a wise design for promoving of His work, even by occasion of such divisions, as thereby to make the Gospel to be spread further than otherwayes it had been; for, by discontents and differences, sometimes men have been put to go elswhere and preach the Gospel; and in that instance of Paul and Barnabas their separating, this is brought about; the Gospel is preached by both in their feveral journeys, which had not been so extended had they been together; but this, and others of this kind being only proper to the Lords foveraign wildom, we will not infift on them.

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In the ficond place, If we confider mens own accession who are engaged in such divisions, that is manifold. 1. Men by former guiltinesse may procure the fame, as by abule of former unity, carnalnesse in it, not improving of it for edification, pride and congettedness of it as if it could not be interrupted not being thankful to God for it, nor praying for continuance of it. These and such like, may draw on such a dreadful stroke as division; wherefore not only is there a we to the world because of offences, but also to him by whom they come, Matth. 18. even when notwithstanding . the necessity of them is afferted. 2. Some present finful distemper in Ministers frame, or disposition; may have influence upon this, as it were disposing them the sooner to take fire upon any occasion. As, s. distance with God, and coldnesse of love to Him, without which, love cannot be keeped up with others in Him. 2. Pride, conceitinesse, defire of preheminencie, respect and applause, which

was amongst the Apostles. 3. Which followeth upon this, envy at the respect which is given to others, or the weight that they have in the managing of matters, and carnal emulation at their persons and actions. 4. There is a secret discontentednesse at mens being fleighted by others, or apprehending themselves to be so. s. There is a credulousnesse and readinesse to receive wrong impressions, a jealouse or fuspicion of others in their defigns, ends, or particular respects to them; All which proceeding from want of charity, that thinketh not evil, &c. they cannot but some way dispose for division. 6. There is an itching newfangle humour, not after new Doctrines, but after new expressions, formes, or changes in other

7. There is sometimes a prejudice at severi-

ty and firidnesse, as if it were pride, ambition, or Something that is intolerable; which is marked to be the cause of the Clergie of Constantinople, their dissention with Chrylostome their Bishop: Of this kind, to wit, finful and disposing causes, are ignorance, impru-

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dence, tenaciousnesse, or self-willedness, and such like;

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whereby a Minister is the calilier engaged, and the more difficultly brought off.

2. There are some acts whereby men have accession to the raifing and heightening of division, and oftentimes they are mutual : As, I. fome mens do- Inconfidering of some inconsiderate act, or writing some in- ate expresconfiderate expression upon the one hand; and others, sons or too paffionatly and vehemently exaggerating fuch a actings. fact, and condemning such an expression by a torturing deduction of absurdities therefrom, beyond what was intended; So it was between Ferome and Augufline, &c. 2. When some preffe feverity in Disci- Severity in pline and Centures, formewhat too hotely, others, Discipline. with no leffe discontent, repelling the same. 2. When Sleighting men fleightingly expresse their mind of the persons, of the perwritings or actings of others; and they again are fons, writengaged by the like reflections, to vindicate the same, ings, or 4. When men study not the instruction of themselves actings of or others affectionedly, but hunt after a kind of cre- others. dir to themselves, though with the reproach of Hunting others. s. Little condescending to remove mistakes after credit and prejudices, abstinence from society, and sellow- Little conthip with fuch as they differ from in some particular; descending, hafty preaching, and publishing differences of smal dec. moment, as Epiphaneus, and tome others, formerly cited, did, no condescending in particular sacts that might be condescended in , and such like. 6. Espe- Acts that cially such acts as state a schilm, and break commu- state schilm. nion in Government, Worship, and other Ordinances, are exceedingly instrumental in this. As, 1. to have diffinct Bishops or Ministers, Governours or Officers, and so to have opposit Judicatories, and opposit Ordinations, which is often found to be the refult and great cherishment of divisions in the primitive rimes. Whereupon followed, 2. divifion in administration of Sacraments, when such and fuch could not acknowledge men so ordained to be Ministers, and so could not communicate with them, if they were ordained in opposition to them, or such as were ordained by them: And this hath a connexi-

en with fuel an ed , because the admowledging of fuch to be lawfully ordained, would question their own Ordination. Whence, & follow divided Congregations and meetings, according to the opposition amongst Ministers, some meeting in one place, and some in another, and so withdrawing communion one from another, although both do continue in the fame Faith and Government : As may be feen in feveral of these divisions mentioned at Antioch, Confantinople, &c. Upon which again followed, 4 oppofit preaching amongst Ministers, each condemning others as Schismaticks, and not to be keeped commuon with; one calling that a duty which the other called a fin, and matter of humiliation, and contrarily: As also, mutual railing and reviling amongst the sollowers of fuch fides, which often bath come to tumults; whereby it appeareth how great influence fuch things have upon divition. Yea, 5. it hath come to divide families; Often Augustine regrateth in his Epistles, that their division made the man and wife whom one bed did contain, in an incapacity to be contained in the same Church, where the same faith was preached, and so he urgeth it also in reference to parents, and children, and to mafters and fervants. There are many moe things might be named, as centuring of men upon luch difference; for, then often some adhere to them, which maketh a rent, as in these inflances of Eustachius and Chrysostome is clear, urging the condemning of fome writings and tenents not fundamental; Thus the preffing of the condemning of Origens writings (which are not supposed by some to have been fo groffe as now thefe which are called his, are) did give much occasion of contention and division amongst men, who otherwayes did acknowledge all the fundamental rruths comprehended in the general Councels, and it is alike alfo, did not agree with him in his groffest errours, yet would not judicially condemn him, and others such like.

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Made now easy or they worker TE come now in the third place to confi-V der, what occasional means may have influenc upon this divition amongst godly men; And inchmay be. Is Some talebearers and feoret whifpers Talebearers ers, who may have much influence to alienate good! mens affections, by mifreprefenting the words and actions of others, under pretext of respect to them, when, in the mean time, it may be forme particular discontent that puttern them on : It is marked that one Serapion had much influence to alienate Chrylattome and Severinus, who formerly were exceeding intirey who suggested to the first, many evidences of the others diffepe & to him, as if he had been endeavouring to draw-the peoples affections from him and for that cause, picked out some words of Severinus which being confidered alone, did found grofly, but being confidered in the Sentence as spoken by him, they were not of fuch a meaning. 2. Often when differences arile amongst honest men, there wanteth not many, who out of particular defigns do these foment that fire, especially such as from some other fear, take occasion to exaggerate such a difference, because the fostering of that difference is the preventing of what they fear: As for instance, Chrysoftome had threatned the centuring of many of his Presbyters for their faults, whereupon they took the occasion of tensures. the differences berwixt him and Epiphanius, Severinus, and others, to irritate and ftir up them against him, and to fide with them in these differences; whereby the division against him, and such as followed him, was maintained till it came to the height thereof, yet were neither the differences betwixt him and these other men, nor the persons of these other men his op-

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polices respected by them, further than serveit to their end of bearing him down, and to of preventing The influ- the threatned and feared centure. 2. Sometimes Magiftrares have had no little influence upon this, either by precending to fide with one party in these differences against the other, when yet it was not these differences but some other prejudice, as from free speaking or the like, which did engage them. It's marked in that same case of Chrysoftome, that the Emperour and Empresse did concur to bear down his followers, and those that sided with him, because of fome particular discontent at his free preaching, for which cause they were zealous executers of the Synods Sentence; As these again that were opposite to Chryfostome of the Clergie, did take no little advantage of that discontent, which they knew the Empresse had at him. Or on the other fide, they are fometimes accessory by weakening Government, and giving men accesse to do what they will: when Basilus hath regrated the great differences of the Church in Julian and Valens their times, and fetting himself to find out the cause thereof, he settleth on this word in the Book of the Judges, In those dayes there was no King in Ifrail every man did what feemed good in his own eyes: which he doth not speak simply, as if there had been no Government; but that by fuch as was, no course was taken, as the calling of Synods, or luch like means, to reftrain such things, but rather they were entertained. A. Sometimes also, the peoples engaging and fiding in such differences, bath no little influence to heighten and lengthen the fame; hence we find that in some debates, wherein Church-men have been alone engaged, there hath been fome flop; but when it hath encreased, to the stating of parties amongs the people, it hath ever been more difficult; because fo Ministers were the more encouraged and engaged to be tenacious; yea fometimes fear of displeating the people that adhered to them a hath not wanted its weight. Alfo, fo it turned more eafily to schill and faction in practice, when one part of the people

Peoples engaging.

would only call fuch a man of their Judgement; another part of the people; fuch another man of theirs; whereupon followed great differtions and factioniness in Elections, and opposite ordinations; by Bithops of feveral judgements: Whereupon followed, drawing with their Bishop and Minister, and the other pare with theirs, and neither keeping communion with, but feeking to overturn one another. And, a. a rent among neighbouring Bifhops and Miniflers, according as they were pleafed to admit either fide to their communion, and acknowledge or condenn either of the opposite ordinations. 2. Often allo, there followed opposite and eager applications to the Supream Magistrates and Emperour. to have their own respective Elections ratified, and that which was opposite, by his Authority, crushed; which often hath been followed with much bitternels, and fometimes not without calumnies against pood men; and also not without prejudice to the Churches liberty, and advantage to corrupt men or Mapillrares, that were not tender of truth; who thereby had occasion to interest themselves, and advance their own ends the more; it is marked of Anaftafius the Emperour, who was a Monothelite, than he took occasion upon hot differences in the Church amongst Divines, (who did in both fides differ from him, though one of them was but found) without respect to right or wrong, equally to endeavour the suppressing of both by sending them into exile; and when Magistrates were more equal to and tender of the Church, as Theodofius, Gratianus, &c. yet they were exceedingly troubled with such addresses, and put to hear such complaints even amongst and against men fully Orthodox and found; only differing in some particulars which had brought on opposite ordinations, as in the cases of Miletius and Paulinus, Eustachius and Flavianus, with their respective competitors: all which concurring with that heat and feryour wherewith Churchmen do usually of themselves

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follow their differen the heightening and lengthening of directors the heightening and lengthening of directors rents, upon the smallest occasions, as Occasional approach and continue a breach, that when some persons on either side become morning in other points of Doctrine, or in practices of low their defigns by means that feeth grolle and warrantable to the other; or when fome of one ages of per- expresse unjust calumnies on the other : this doe ceedingly alienate affections . confirm jealouse suspicions , and readily doth engender new Que and controversies; because some are led to p and condemn, and others to defend fuch pradice therefore there must be opposite principles furni theretato, and so they multiply from one slep to a ther: whereby it cometh to passe, that often abo there is but one difference at first, after a time me do arife, which doth make the removal of diville to be alwayes the longer the more difficult : WI

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fons.

Occurring we fee, that feldom one difference continued any to difference continued any to difference continued any to onsof proconcernment, that it may be, fluck, whenas the first
widence. rise might have been removed. 6. Sometimes also ecurring dispensations in providence will give occuson to this tenacions in providence will give occuson to this tenacions in providence will give occusadvantage on the one fide to through their point, and dis
bear down the other wishes soil. bear down the other without uniting, it is supposed to to be conscience and prudence to make use of the so same: Hence we will find in History men more of D fesse inclinable to unite, as they apprehended their average. party to be more or leffe firong; cometimes also lone by fingular-like firoak upon the person mainds but be families of eminent opposers, proveth a confir commation to the others who escape, as of the others way were more approveable, and the others 19 more remarkably condemned; for fo are mende ready to misinterpret the most occasional thing of which for other ends may come upon any with whom my they differ. Thus Zuinglins his death did not only ere prove

ugh without any at debate. Luther h oferried, unftable perfon. not to be valued; which acn made many keep up the opinion if by his fall it had been ratified; that if either Chryfoliome or Eniphaneus nto other respectively had fallen out but to side, it also might have had influence; buttleting both came to palle, we conceive that there-by the Lord would keep men from being confirmed in their differences upon such differentions, and they bindelf angry at the carnalnesse of good men, even in

to the similar distriction of the carnalization of good men, even in the chiral field difference on both fides.

In the court place, we have to confider, wherein the fire the fourth place, we have to confider, wherein the fire the fourth place, we have to confider, wherein which the fire the tentation to keep up division doth my directly, in respect of several circumstances that may have figured influence, especially upon Church-men.

There is engagement, credit, and such like, the like of the confidence of the

allow which fical in , and vent in heat and tenaciousnesse occasion ander other appearances, as of zeal for Gods bonour, feeming raspect to the credit of the Ministry, and of the Orien, and dinances. And in this it seemeth not to be any perint, and dinances. And in this it feemeth not to be any perappoint fonall credit or respect that swayeth them, but zeal
to take for, and respect to the Master, as is insinuated in the
moreon Disciples carriage. Luke 9. in their seeking to be
to their avenged on the place that would not receive Christ,
to some by fire from heaven, ver. 54. and also in their formost in budding some to cast out devils, even in his name, beconfired and they thought it not for Christs honour, which. t the west 49.44 . Squate only

others 19230 The tentation bath often with it great confire men dence of the fullness and equity of their own lide, and thing of the unreasonablenesse of their adversaries. There whom may be in pure much ground for this, where the connot only provertic is some doubtfull, disputable thing: How prove great

Perfonall credit afting under covert of zeal for God.

great confidence have both Job and his Ment their debate, So that both of them are requested firing Gods decision, when as neither of them are matter and matther was fully approved better the times also there may be a persuasion very faths to the party, when yet it is not from God; this in Galatia, chap; s. ver. 8. It is like on both fides. when they were biting and devouring one anoth for we find often in experience, that a disputable his being for a time pleaded for, will become at pal clear, and altogether necessary to these who disputed for the same, because engagement bribe light, and perverteth even the wildom of the ju Hence we fee, that the longer one plead for a dil he becometh more confident therein because his ow

pleading fecretly prevaileth thore with himfel than reasons proposed by any others to the count

3. There is a ftrength in the tentation , in this that not only the matter is thought just, but it thought recellary and of great concernment, if it be 1. a Question of the most circumstantial truth. we may speak to) it looketh our as necellary, and thing that cannot be quityea, even those who are engaged to maintain that fide where the errour lies, w cry up the controversie as in a high point of Christia nity. Amongst the Fathers, these that maintained the Millenarie opinion, and Christs personal reign thought it a point of high concernment? Juffine Mar tyr in his Dialogue with Trife, faith, he is no Chrifilm, Orthodox in all things, who doth think other wife; and in later Popish Writers, how is the inceffity of oil, chrisme, and such like pleaded for? which sheweth what impression the appearing weightinesse of such things will have on them, as if it were a main foundation of Religion. And, 2. If it be a matter of fact or Government, it is thought of fuch concernment for the good of the Church that they cannor quit it, whithout being accessory to the corruption and hurt, or to the marring of the authority

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Hence to often are the faults and confequence of the adverte part aggreged; canons and nongit other instances) in that debate betwiere and constantinopie for precedency before Antichrift was revealed, one alleaging an act of Nice, the other, an act of the Councel of Chaicedon, and Rame presending the interest of Saint Peter, and the good of the universal Church. And, 3, if it be a difference about persons, as who is to be acknowledged Bishop or Minister, or if such be lawfully ordained, depoled, &c. then such as they oppose, are conceived to be notoriously hainous; and such as they are for, are believed to be incomparably fingu-lar and eminent, and therefore it is no wonder that they prelie vehemently their point, as thinking that much of the good or evil of the Church doth depend upon the admission, or rejection of such men respedively, and this floweth inadverting from the former differences; because, when they are confident that themselves are right in a main point, they necesfarily mult think these wrong and untender who are opposite in such a thing, and the hotter the opposition grow, they think still each other the more grolly obflinate: By this also they are disposed to hear and receive reports and mil-informations concering their apponents; whereby they come verily to believe, that they are even in all other things, and in their very ends and defigns, most groffe. And, I suppose, that befide the instances formerly given in all these respeds, the differences that arose first betwix Luther and Caroloffadius, and afterward bewixt him and fuch exfollowed him on the one fide, and Zuinglius, Calvin and others upon the other fide, do fully demonstrate shis, How little were these beginnings at first, and yet how were even the smallest differences aggreged, and the persons differing mistaken, even before these differences came to the height which they are at? And we may observe also, that this mistake of mens persons and actions, and bitternesse that followth there-

A particular mistake of mens persons and actions.

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thereupon is most ordinary discernable to be upon that side, where there is least to be said in conscience and equity for the desence thereof.

A convi-Etion of fingleness in profecuting and adhering,

4. Adde to these a conviction of finglenetter! persons may seem to themselves to have in all the fi mer steps, wherein there may be no positive, corru end proposed, nor any palpable diffirmulation in the professions, entertained or approved by them, but they have some confidence of the equity of their file fo may there be an apprehended refilmony of the own finglenesse in the following thereof: and there a great strength in the tentation to continue division that iyeth here; for, when men apprehend their of finglenesse and straightnesse, and, it may be, he accesse to God, and have liberty to pray, even in re ference to such things , it is not case for a man flop himfelf in that way; and yet it cannot be the but amongst the instances of such divisions that are ven, that men on both fides had a fingle end and aim did pray and had accesse in prayer; yea, no questi on, many ofthem might goto heaven with fuch diffe rences on both fides; for, we will find them continue zealous in luch, even to death. Neither ought this to be thought strange; for, the best but know in part, and are subject to mistakes, and their zeal and finglenesse is squared according to their knowledge: It was such zeal, that is not according to knowled (though in the most fundamentall things) that made Paul and others, with a kind of fingleneffe, perfectite the Church; therefore proportionally, there may be a zeal and finglenesse in lesser things when their a igporance of them.

Fear of losing credit by relenting. 5. After engagement the tentation is firengthened by this, left, by after-ceding, their former practice in being so eager, be condemned, and they lose the weight of their Ministery in other things, and their respective followers, which possibly may be more tenacious and zealous than themselves, should be irritated and provoked; which things look to them as greater prejudices, even to the work of the Gospel, that

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on their continuing divided. It is written of Lu-ter in his life. That being in conference with Melan-ton and others in his last voyage, he did acknowledge rothern, that he had been too vehement and peremptory in the Doctrine of the Sacrament; and when they arged him then to publish fomething conceruing the fame, he replied. That he feared by that to dimunify the authority and weight of what he had elfe appeared into for God, and therefore did forbear elf: appeared into for God, and therefore did forbear in withall, allowing Meles Cibon after his death, to do

is theres he thought fit.

no. Sometimes also, the tentation is ftrengthned by Fear of ended confequents of hurr and prejudice to burting these that fide with them in such a thing from others, their folin case there should be ceding in such and such parti- lowers. culars for union, or that by fo doing, they might make shemielves and their cause odious to others, who posthoughts of them, because of their differing in such things from others. It is written of Luther, that he gave this as a main reason why he keeped up the Sacramencary difference, and would not unite with calvis and others in that Head, because, said he, that opialon which the Sacramentaries (as they were called) hold is generally more hatefull than that of Canfubflantiation, and will make the Princes and others more obnoxious to malice and harred.

In frengtheneth the tentation alfo, when men The tentado not look upon the difference simply in it felf, but comparatively with respect to the principles and cartrages of others their opponents, and by confidering looking on things that are displeasing in them and their way, the failthey are made the more tenacious, and brought to justifie themselves the more, Hence it is in such divisions, that the great strelle of debates lyeth in reflections, criminations and recriminations, as if this were the only vindicating argument, They that are opposite to us in many things of their carriage are wrong, Therefore our way is right, or we have reafon to divide from them; And hence it is, that almost

tion Brengthened by ings of opposites.

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accellarily fuch seffections are afeat in fuch where the matter is not of fuch moments dence, as the most convincing defensive argume upon cicker fide, as in these debates, between ju-and Ruffinss, cited, where there is no dispute on are fide but criminations on both; Allo in the Denatif their reflections this may be observed.

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8. In such differences also, men are ready to think Hope of the that the other should and will cede to them, and of not hazard division upon so little a thing. Him many have been drawnon to division from small be ginnings which they would not have yeelded to had they known the confequents thereof, or had the not expected that the other should have yeelded wherein being disappointed, the engagement thereto becometh more frong and the division more irreconciliable. This is marked of Victor, of whom it is fald, that he had not been fo peremptory, had he nor supposed, that in such a thing the other should of the second se have veelded. with the range big

CHAR. VI.

What be the fad effects of division, and the necessity of 15位;2位46位于13。16位6 endeavouring unity.

Aving now some way discovered the nature and causes of the evil of division, it may beeafily conjectured what will be the effects thereof, which ever have been most deplorable, as to the torruring of these that are engaged, to the seandslizing of the weak, to the hardening and breaking of the neck of many profate light persons, to the spolling of the Church in its purity, Government, order and beauty of her Ordinances, and which is more, to the wearing out of the life and power of Religion; yea, which is above all, there is nothing that doth more tend to the reproach of the bleffed Name of our Lord Jesus, that maketh Christianity more hareful, that rendereth the Gospel more unfruitful, and more marreth

and in a word, down more that our in by an open door every thing that o the Church, than this woful cyll of dion doth, according to the word, Jam. 3. 16. work And we are perfuaded, that who hath read the scriptures, and the many and great motives whereby amion is preffed, and have confidered the Fathers what great weight they lay upon unity; and with min malum, or the greatest evil that can befal the rch; Or, have observed in Church-history, the miny fad confequents and effects that have followed upon this, and the lamentable face of the Church under the fame : when friends thought shame, and were made faint; enemies were encouraged and delighted, and on-lookers were either provoked to mock ar, or picy the same; Or, who have had some rafte in experience of the bitter fruits thereof, will, andif they be not altogether stupid, cannot but be convinced of the many horrible evils, that are in this one evil of division. Sure there is no evil doth more suddenly and inevitably overturn the Church than this; which maketh her fight against her self, and ear her own flesh, and rear her own bowels: for, that a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand, is the infallible maxime of Him that was greater and wifer than Solomon. And when things are compared, it will be found, there is no more compendious way to blaft the fruit of Ordinances, when they cannot be removed or corrupted, and by fo doing, to deffroy and carry fouls headlong, than this, That a Church in her Ministers and Members should be engaged thus, to bire and devour one another, and to counseract to the actings one of another; This we sup-

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pole will not be denied. It will also readily be granted , That it is the duty ofendeavorof all Christians, especially of Ministers of the Gos- ing unity, pel, to endeavour the preferring of unity; and the granted by

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when it is made. Never when it is made. Never did men run to quench in a Gicy, left all flould be defired, with more ligence, than men ought to beffir themselves to quench in the Church; never did mariners alle more speto stos a leak in a ship, left all should be droved, than Ministers especially, and all Christian in should hast to stop this beginning of the breaking of these waters of strife, left thereby the whole Church and it should be the seaking of these waters of strife, left thereby the whole Church and the strength of the seaking of these waters of strife, left thereby the whole Church and the strength of the seaking of the seaking of the seaking of the seaking of the seaking of these waters of strife, left thereby the whole Church and the seaking of the seak be overwhelmed; And if the many evils which low thereupon, the many commands whereby ut is prefied; yea, the many entreaties and obtefun whereby the holy Ghoft doth to frequently urge upon all, as a thing most acceptable to Him, and p fitable to us; If, I fay, thefe and many other fuch on fiderations, have not weight to convince of the nee fity of this duty, to prevent, or heal a breach, We en not tell what can prevail with men, that professe ri verence to the great and dreadfull Name of God, to science of duty, and respect to the edification of the Church, and their own peace at the appearance of the Lord in the great Day, wherein the peacem ers shall be bleffed ; for, they shall be called the chil dren of God. And the state of share an nongration

CHAP. VIII

granted, is that ! If General Grounds teading to Vnity souloids to that icasilecible

division most difficult.

D Ut now, it may be of more difficulty to footh particularly, to what indeed is duty at fuch a time when a Church lyeth under rents and di-The cure of visions. For, though the general be granted, yet of ten, it is difficult to take up the particular cure, and yet more difficult fingly to follow the fame : It being still more easy to prescribe rules to others, than to follow them our felves, especially in such a case, when spirits are in the heat and servour of contention, whereby they are some way drunken with affection

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diffracted, as it were, with a fort of madesale in pur-turing ritors adverfaries, as that goest and meek. Divine actuation did expresses, so that it is hard to get af-fections, that are in such a temper, captivated to the obedience of light. And though we will not take on us to be particular and facisfying in this, withing and hoping that it may be more effectually done by some other; yet, having come this length, we shall, in an objected manner, consider some things in reference the results, and endeavour to hold forth what we conneive to be duty, especially to the Ministers of the Gospel, that have interest in such a Church; As also ar may be required of others, that may possibly think themselves lefte concerned therein; Where-in we shall keep this order, it. we shall ay down some eneral Grounds, which we suppose as granted, 2. We that premit some preparatory endeavours agreeible to the same. 4. We shall speak negatively to what ought not to be done, or ought to be forborn. 4. Politively to the healing means called for in reference ofeverations of divisions, with some questions incident thereupon. And laftly, We shal consider the grounds that do prefle the ferious and condescending application of thefe, or other healing means in fuch acale,

The first generall ground, which we take for An absolute granted, is this, That by way of precept there is an necessity absolute necessity of uniting laid upon the Church, laid upon a fo that it falleth norunder debate, Whether a Church rent Church fould continue divided or united in the Thefe? to unite. more than it falleth under debate, Whether there should be preaching, praying, keeping of the Sabbath, or any other commanded duty; feing that union is both commanded as a duty, and commended, as eminently tending to the edification of the Church, and therefore is so frequently joyned with edification Nor is it to be asked by a Church, what is to be done for the Churches good, in a divided way, thereby fuppofing a dispensation, as it were, to be given to diviinon,

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flow, and a forbeating of the use of means for the talning through; or eather supposing a flatta fixing of division, and yet notwithflanding the thinking to carry ou edification? It is true, w union cannot be attained amongst orthodox Mini flers, that agree in all main things, (for of such only we (peak) Ministers are to make the belt use of the opportunities they have, and during that to lock th edification of the Church; Yet, that men should agreement flate a division in the Church, or diff therewith, and prefer the continuing of division fitter for edification than union, we suppose is als gether unwarrantable. 1. Because, that is not Lord's Ordinance, and therefore cannot be gone about in faith . nor in it can the bleffing be expected, which the Lord doth command to those that are in unline Pfal. 133. 2. Because Christ's Church is but on Body, and this were deliberatly to alter the nature thereof: and although those who deny this Truth may admit of division; yea, they cannot have union. that is proper Church-union, which is union in Government, Sacraments, and other Ordinances, because union, or communion in these, doth result from this principle; yet it is impossible for those that maintain that principle of the unity of the Catholick visible-Church, to owne a divided way of administrating Government or other Ordinances, but it will infer either that one party hath no interest in the Church, or that one Church may be many; and fo that the unity thereof in its visible state is to no purpose; This then we take for granted. And though possibly it be not in all cases attainable, because the fault may be upon one fide, who possibly will not act unitedly with others, yet is this fill to be endeavoured, and every opportunity to be taken hold of for promoting union a of the fame.

thing at- The second ground which we suppose, is this. That tainable a- as union is ever a duty, So, we conceive, if men inmongortho- tereffed will do their duty, there can be no divition doz Di- amongst Orthodox Divines or Ministers, but it is possible wines.

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For 1. We are not specifing of compo-terior are flated upon the sendamental rare we speaking of removing all diffechings; and the lipeaking of removing all differences, as if all men were to be one in Judgement in every point of Truth; there may be difference where there is no division as both been faid. Nor, 3, when we speak of mens doing their duty, do we mean a full up-coming of every thing in knowledge and bractice, and that in a fandified manner, though this ought to be endeavoured; but it looketh principalities are delay of days in ofference with the looketh principalities are delay of days in ofference. cipally to the doing of duty in reference to this particular (If it may be called to) of actaining union , a great part whereof doth confift in outward obvious things, which do neither require fimply fancilies cion in the perion (though in it felf most desirable) nor prefection in the degree, some whereof we may afterward mention; so that the meaning is, if we confider union in it felf, without respect to mens correptions, (which will make the least thing impossible when they are in exercise) it is a thing possible, according to the acknowledged principles, that lober, orthodox men niually walk by, as experience hath often proven, and reason doth demonstrat in the particulars afterward to be infranced. And this confideration ought the more proffingly to flir up the endeayour of this duty, although oftentimes through mens corruption it hath been fruitrated,

Thirdly, we premit, That in endeavouring union and healing, men would not firaiten it to an universal union in every thing; in judgement and practice, but would refolve to have it with many things detective that need forbearance in persons that are united; which me may take up in these particulars. There may be difference of judgement in many things. I mean in such things that are consistent with the soundation, and edification; and such a forbearance would be resolved upon, and to do otherwayes, were to think that either men had no reason at all, or that their understandings were persect, or at

Endeavouringunion, doth
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Staff of equal reach. 2. There may be difficult dison with many perform; whether Officers or their bess; and to expedia Church free of unworthy officers, or Members, and to defer Church union there upon, is to expect the barn floor fluil be withou chaff, and to fruftrate the many commands where this duty is prefled; for fo this command thould be obligatory to no Church, but that that is trained phant; yet certainly our Lord Jefus gave this command to His Disciples when Judas was amongs them; and Paul gave it and practifed it, when fi preached out of envy, Philip. 1. and when almost a fought their own things, and nor the things of Christs.
And certainly, if people ought to carry even to carsupt Ministers who yet destroy not the foundation, Ministers, in the duries that becomes them to Mini-flers in communion with them, while they continue fuch, Then certainly Ministers ought to keep the communion with Ministers, that becometh their re lations, feing they are still Ministers in that respect; as well as in the other. And if this corruption will not warrant separation in other Ordinances, as was faid in the close of the second part, Then neither will it warrant divition in the ordinance of government. 3. It may also be consistent with many particular failings, and detects in the exercise of government, as possibly the sparing of some corrupt Officers and Members, year the Centuring of fome unjustly, or the admittion of fome that are unfit for the Ministery, and such like These indeed are faults, but they are not such as make a Church to be no Church; and though these have fometimes been presended to be the causes of schilling and divisions in the Church in practice, yet were they never defended to be just grounds of schisms and divi tions, but were ever condemned by all Councels and Fathers, and cannot be in reason sustained. For there should be then no union expected here & ixcept we supposed, that men that have corruption, could not fall in these faults. 2. It is not unlike, but some of these were in the primitive Churches , some what

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, Rev. a. in those Church of Jewellund the Nicolai people, and to commit fornication; ration or division called-for or alall Ministers or people. Sure there acts of all kinds amoneft the Tews ers; yet is it clear, that Nicodemus and athea did continue to govern joyntly, notwithflanding thereof, who yet cannot be controlled which is a second of their deeds; Because (which is a ading thereof, who yet cannot be counted greafon) men in fuch cases have accesse, even in they are present, to discountenance such correpeates, by not conferring thereto, and teffifying against the larne, (yes, they may by so doing, stand in the way of many wicked acts, which by dividing they cannot do) which is sufficient for their exoneration both before God and men: As we may fee in the inflances of Joseph and Nicodemus mentioned, who continue united in the government, keeped the meetings even when Sentences palle against those who ll acknowledge Chrift, and orders for perfecuting Him and them; and yet they are declared free, because they differted from, and restified against the fame; yea, their freedom and exoneration by verrue of their diffent being prefent, is more felemnly seconded to their honour in the Gospel, than if they d divided; And yet the unity of the Church now hash the same ground, and no sower motives to presse Union may it than it had then. 4. It may stand with some de- stand with fects in Worthip, manner of Government, and some defects. sules that are necessary for Good government in a in worthin Church. It is like that many things of that kind, and manuty were defective in the Church of Corinth where the of Governgramens was fo diforderly administrated (as hath ment. been marked) confusion in many things of Worthip, and some things still to be set in order; yet doth the Apostle no where press union more than in these Epifiles, as formerly hath been marked; neither can it be thought that perfection in all thefe is ever to be expected, or that union, untill such time is to be delayed .

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layed. And if there be defeat of union and not division that is so be i the commended mean for reda

with what If it be asked then, With what kind of defects bind of de- discontents may an union be made up? or, wh fetts union Rules may be walked by therein? For answer . W

may bemade offer these Confiderations or Rules, up.

1. What cannot warrant a breach where there h union, that cannot warrantably be the ground to ke up a division; Now there are many miscarriages defects, which are really groffe, and yet will not rant a fehifm, as all that write thereon do clear, is obvious to all. The reason of the consequence Because making up of a breach is no lette a duty, d preventing thereof; And further, if it began up fuch a ground, Then the containing thereof upon t fame ground, is but the continuing in the fame fi and it cannot be thought that any party by dividi upon an unjust ground, can afterward be justi upon the fame ground; It remainesh therefore, that if the ground was not fufficient at first to warrant afeparation or division, ir cannot be fulficient afterward to continue the fame.

Rule 2. Such defects as do not make communion in a Church, and in its Ordinances fintul, will not warrant a separation or division from the same; for this followeth on the former. It is acknowledged all, that there is no separation from a true Church fuch Ordinances, as men may withour fin commu cate into, although others may be guilty therein; suppose men to have accesse to Government witho fuch bonds and engagements, and fuch like, as me mar their freedom in following the light of the Word in deciding whatever shall come before them . eve

though others should step over the same.

Rule 2. Men may keep communion with a Church, when their calling leadeth them thereto upon the one fide, and they have accesse to the discharge of the fame upon the other; this also followeth upon the former: for, if some acts of a mans flation lead time

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minister do) then he is oblidged to follow the duries of his calling, whilst there is no physical or moral impediment barring him in the same, and others being defective in their duty, will not absolve him from his, which he oweth by vertue of his station.

Rule 4. While the general rules rending to edification in the main are acknowledged, union is to be keeped, even though there be much failing in the application; because, so there are fit weapons to make use of, and who knoweth but fingle and zealous improving of them, may help the application thereof; and if there be a failing therein, it is the persons deed, that by his vote so misapplyeth, and doth not involve any other in that guilt, beside that by joynt and united acting much of that misapplication may

through Gods bleffing be prevented.

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Male is. Then there may and ought to be uniting when the evils that follow divition or schism, are greater and more burtful to the Church, than the evils that may be supposed to follow on union. speak not of ills of fin, (for the least of these are never to be chosen) but of evils and inconveniences that may indeed be hurrful to the Church in themselves, and finful in respect of some persons, yet are not so to all: Now, in such evils the leffer is to be chosen. because uniting and acting joyntly in a Church-way. dorh belong to the policy and government of the Church wherein Christian prudence is to have a main hand. So that when things cannot be done as men would simply, they are to do as they may comparatively, that is, to choose and make use of what may be most editying, and least hurrful to the Churches edification (which is the great end that ought to (way in Government) amongst all these means that feem probable and possible; So that the conscience may have teltimonic in this, that the way that had fewell inconveniencies. and manyest advantages to edification, was chosen; and though fome inconveniencies fall out ufterward, yet the confeience may be quier

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quiet on this ground; Because, sometimes the Lorent His providence will order to in the matters of Go vernment, that there is no fide can be chosen without inconveniencies; As suppose, there is not full faristaction in any way that occurreth in planting suche Congregation, in removing of such an offence, healing fuch a rent, and the like; but whatever fide be looked to, many hinderances to edification appear. ver formething must be chosen, and may be with peace to the conscience; because we are to regulate our or act fuitably to the providences, and cases we me with, and to the tempers of thele we have to do with but we are neither to regulate nor answer for providences, and the diffempers of others. Indeed in such a case, the mind my be disquiered because of fear; and the confolation of the duty may be diminished because of such circumstances; and affections may be grieved and jumbled, because there is not full farisfaction; yet may the confcience have quietnels and peace in its duty notwithstanding; and men are specially to difference between peace of conscience and the former discomposures; other-

when inwaves there will be many cases wherein it is imposconvenien fible for a zealous Minister to have peace, whatever cies are on fide he choose, yea, whether he do or forhear. all bands. mbat fide is to be fol-

lowed.

It it be asked then, What way men may differn the fide that is to be followed in such case, whe inconveniences thereaten on all hands? Anfin. these and such like wayes, t. It is to be looked what fide hath the most dangerous and definitive inconveniencies, 2. What inconveniencies are molt cerrain and inevitable, and the greatest and most inevit ble inconveniencies are to be shunned, and men would not choose a certain hurt to eschew that which I uncertair. 3. It would be looked, what fide duty lieth upon, or to what the command doth preffe; and although inconveniencies feem to follow that, yet it is to be followed as most safe. Now, as to all thele union hath the advantage of division : Because, to dening the from endeas during the price snime

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the commanded mean tending to edification, which avilion is not. 2. Division harh no lesse not fewer inconveniencies following it, nor lesse destructive to the Church, than union in the case supposed; yea, schim is one of the greatest hurts that can come to an orthodox Church, it being next to hereste in Doctrine.

and therefore no particular-evil can be laid in the ballance with it. 3. The ills of division are most inevitable, for the ills that follow union, through Gods blefsing may be prevented, it is not impossible, but in the way of division it is, because it self is out of Gods

way.

Rule 6. When men may unite without personal guilt, or accession to the defects of guilt of others, there may and ought to be union, even though there e failings and defects of leveral kinds in a Church. The reasons before given will clear this because men are to reckon not for other mens carriages, but their own, and no such Church-state is to be expected as isfree of defects. Befide, can it warrand a man to abstain from his dury because others do not theirs; whileas there is no finfull impediment lying in the way of his accesse thereto. If it be asked, What may be accounted such impediments, as a tender conscience may be justly scarred by from uniting? It may be answered in these and such like . I. If a perfor be put to condemn any thing he thinketh lawful in his own former practice, or the practice of others, or in some point of Doctrine though never so extrinfick, if it be to him a point of truth. 2. If he be put to approve the deed and practice of some others which he accounteth finful, or to affirm somewhat as truth which he doth account an errour. 3. When fome engagement is required for the future, which doch reftrain from any duty called-for, or that may afterward be called for. These and such like involve perions in the fin of what is past, and also maketh them accellory to the inconveniencies which may come, because they are bound up with their own confent, from endeavouring the preventing thereof in the way of duty, at least it is so to them, and so.

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defileth their confeience. Therefore fuch en ments are by all means to be forborn; but wh fucli thing is in condemning or acknowledging any thing that is paft, nor any fuch reftraining bond inconfiftent with duty for the time to come, there may be accesse to union, even where there are many publick defects, which is the thing laid down to be cleared.

fary.

Mutual In the fourth place we premit, That for attaining condescend- of union there would be, and there ought to be ing neces- large mutual condescending, that is, that both side ought to ffreach themselves, for only to forbear what is finful; nor only to condescend to what may be thought fimply necessary, and may be extorted as duty in any case; Nor yet ought condescending to be upon on fide levelled according to the length that another goetli, but condescending would be levelled mutually according as expediencie calleth for with refpect to the edification to the Church; for which end even many infirmities of others are to be forborn, and things otherwayes unreasonable in respect of these men we have to do with, yet respect to the Churches peace, ought to make men cede in their; for, if there oughe to be condescending for private peace, much more ought it to be for Church-peace and publick edification, and though we captor for will not now be particular in this, yet concerning it. we may lay down these confiderations,

1. In what may involve a man in fin, or in the apthere must probation thereof in others, there is no condescendbe no con-ing, but what length may warrantably be gone. descending even to the utmost border of duty, men ought to go for this end; fo that nothing ought to be a flop or march in condescention, but this, I cannot do this and fin against God; otherwayes, one ought to be clear; hy comparing it with the former Rules, and the what afterward may be faid.

Mought to 2. This condescention would be mutual uponed defe be nutual, both fides, that is, one party would not expeditell will Submission that

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abmillion from the other, for that is not union, but dominion; Hence the Apolite in his preffing of union in such cases, doth ordinarily pray, and obtest both fides. And feing affection is the main ground ofunion, it is fit, there should be condescention for mutual tellifying of respect each to other. This is also confirmed by an Epiffle of Calvines to Mr. Knox (afterward cited) wherein he presseth that condescention be mutual for removing of a division that was

in his Congregation at Frankford.

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Even that party that feemeth to be rightest in what side the matter, or to have authority on its fide, or to ought to be have countenance from others, ought yet to conde- most condefound, yea in some things to be most condescending, sending. because such are in some fort parents and strong; they ought therefore the more tenderly to bear and cover the infirmities of the weak; and because they are more fober and at themselves, they therefore ought to earry the more ferionfly toward others, whom they suppose to be in a diffemper, and not to be equally groffe in handling the tender things of the Church, whereof union is a main one : And confidering that Even that authority is given for edification, it is not unfortable which is for it to condescend for arraining its end; for which right and cause we find often Paul, laying by his authority in hath authofuch cases, and increating and wooing, as it were even rity. the meanest differers, in this matter of union, as we fee him, Phil.4. befeeching Euodias and Syntiche (who were it is like but very private persons.) to be of one mind. And in ancient times we will find, 1. Sometimes the innocent party ceding and condescending, as in the case betwixt Basilius and Ensebius at Cefarea, Bafilius, though having the best side, and of greatest account, yet did first cede, by withdrawing for the peace of the Church; and afterward, for the good thereof to wit, the preventing of its being tainted by the Arian herefie, he did return, and conpont descend to be subject to him who was in competition of fall with him, which tended exceedingly to the good of lions that Church, to the removing of that Schifm and

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the great praise and commendation of his zent and

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They who did the wrong, or-dinavily most averse from condefeending.

finglenels. 2. We find that oftentimes the molt sender and fincere, and these who were upon the right fide, have been most condescending, and oftentimes these who did the wrong (fuch as it was were most averse from condescention, as in all the Schiims that have arisen upon frivolous grounds will appear. 3. These who condescended most in such things, have ever been thought the greatest friends to the Church, even fometimes when they have been deepest in the rise of the Schism, and when their fide was not so justifiable as the other, yet by condescending they have commended themselves more to the Churches friends than their opposites. It is marked in that schism at Antioch, betwiet Miletius and Pauliaus, who were both Orthodox, yet had they divided governments, and Congregations in the Church, because of different Ordinations, which had keeped them rent for some time; and although Miletius his Ordination and entry-was not so justifiable according to the Canons, as the others was ; yet the parties tepacious upon either fide being strong, there was acceffe to fettle it by no authoritative decision: wherefor it came to a treaty by means of these that were appointed Arbiters, that lo union and communion in the Ordinances might be made up in that Churchs at which conference Miletius overtured , that the might joyn together as Bishops to take care of one Flock while they lived, and after the death of either he who furvived should be only Bishop of the united Flock, unto whom one only should succeed to have charge of all, for preventing of division for the time to come; to which overture, Paulinus would not acquiesce, but stood to the formality of order without valuing the Churches peace, or proposing any just ground of exception against Miletius person or Doctrine; he, to wit, Paulinus was counted un worthy to govern such a Church , and removed there from, and the other as more worthy because of that his condescending, was therefore alone invested in the go vernyer ma mal me refi

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remment thereof. 4. We will find them fometimes yeeld in all particulars that do not involve any confent unto, or approbation of what is wrong. It is marked by Augustine in his Writings against the Donatilis, that fometimes Councels that have condemned men, have for peace without any fatisfaction; again restored them upon after thoughts; and he marketh it as a great condescention of the Bishops of Spain that they did so in the case of Osius when he was found innocent by the French; they did not (faith he) pertinaciously with animosity defend their former Sentences, test they should fall in the sacriledge of a schism, which doth exceed all wi kedness; and with that humility, peace was keeped, because (faith he) they had rather be egainst their own Sentences, than the unity of the Church. And he doth upbraid that principle of the Donatists in the case of one Primianus, who was refused to be reflored by an after Councel of theirs, because a former pretended Synod of their own had depoted him. alleaging, and abusing that word of the Apostles for that end', Gal. 2. If I again build what I have deftroved, then am I found a transgressour; and he doth more commend the practice of Pretextatus and Felicianus, who being condemned (it is like unjustly) by three hundred and eighteen Bishops, yet did, (fairth he) for concords fake, return and joyn with thefe who did condemn them; and by them were without all lolle or diminution of their honour, received into fellowship. And what ever may be in the justice or injustice of any of these former deeds, upon the matter, yet doth he only make use of them, to fhew what condescention ought to be in such cases for peace, both upon the part of Judicarories and particular persons, how ever the matter doth appear unto them; for hecondemned not the rejecting of Primianus because he was unjustly Sentenced, but because; there was not due respect had to the Churches peace; nor doth he commend the Spanish Bishops for recalling an unfult Sentence, which ought to be done for Justice take; but that (though it is no question Y 4 they

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they did think it just) they did condescend to remove it for preventing of a Schiffp, when they faw their deed diffatiffying to others. And it is fo in the other case also, it is these mens submission to these that condemned them, as it evidences respect to concord, and not as confidering any equity of the Sentence which is condemmned by him; this is in what he writeth contra Epistolam Parmeniani. lib. 1. cap. 2, 3, 4, Bcc.

From what is faid, we may lay down these negative conclusions, concerning the upmaking of a breach amongft Godly and Orthodox men, where a Church hath harmony in the fundamental points, Faith, Worship and Government, and where the thriving ftroying any of the Gospel is mutually defigned.

I. Division ought not to be endeavoured to be removed in such a case, in such a way as doth undo or destroy either side, because that is not the good of the whole; for every part and fide in fuch a case, is a part of the body, although it may not be so very confiderable, and it is no wildow to cut off a member of the body, and that way to cure a differmer therein, when possibly the purging away of corrupt humours from the body, or more gentle applications

might recover the same.

2. We fay, that way of uniting is not to be admitted, but shunned which may incapacitate any Minister or member of the body that is fie for edifying of the same, from having accelle thereunto: for To the Church is prejudged, and men are rendred unable for edifying thereof. And this is not only when Sentences are past, or restraints laid on; Burd it may be in such like cases. As , i. when by the terms of union some person is grieved and weighted. by annexing of some unnecessary thing which may be forborn, because by this, men go about duty with heavinesse, which is unprofitable to the Church. 2. It may be, when fomething that reflecteth upon " any fide, or person, unnecessarily, is interwoven; any note of because fuch things still keep up suspicion, and make the

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the union the more heartleffe, and doth both make fuch perfors more faint, and also in the leffer capacity to have weight with others for their edification; and doth leave a ground of diffarisfaction with fuch an agreement, that is ready afterward to break forth; Therefore union would be cliaved with all due respect from each to other, and without any note of difrespect.

3. We may gather, that no fimply authoritative authoritamean is the fit and only way of healing a rent-tive way is Church: That is indeed the way of governing an the fit mean united Church, but not the way of uniting a rent to begin the Church, especially a Church rent in particulars of healing of practice and government; because the remedy must rent Church be extensive to both sides, and in such case, at least, as to these particulars, Authority usually is declined; and though it be unjuftly declined poffibly, yet when it is declined, it is unable to effectuar this end; and the remedy is to be applied, not as what agreeth to a Church that is whole, but what agreeth to a Church in such a distemper; even as a sick body is to be nourished not alwayes with the strongest and wholefomost means which agree with such as are in health, but it is to be nourished with things fuirable to its diffemper, and are fit to cure it; yea, fometimes, with fuch things as may please the tafte, when more healthfull things are not admitted. Also when both judgments are to be informed, and affections are to be gained, there must be prudentiall and affectionat wayes need for gaining these ends. Hence we fee, that not only in Church-history, but in the Scriptures especially, the duty of union is more preffed by perswasions, intresties, reasons to move to it, ills that follow the want thereof, and fuch like, than by an authoritative way, fuch as is used in the condemning of Hereticks, and other feandalous perions. And indeed union hath such conjunction with the will and affections, that it must be perswaded and cannot be so commanded. And amongst such persons as are supposed to be in this difference, privat and par-

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ricular condescention is most becoming that respect which each ought to other.

not to fail.

Though ont Fifthly, We premit, That suppose sufficient condefide fail in fcention thould fall upon one fide, yet ought the ocondescend ther to condescend fully the length that is possible.

ing the o- wi. Because Church-union amongst Church men is ther ought no civil bargain to use prigging therein, but what is possible is duty out of obedience to God, who commanderly peace in other things (and fo, much more in this) as far as is possible, or as in men lyes. And 2. because respect is to be had to the Churches good whole advantage we should seek, even though others were detective; and often fuch condefcending gain the more for the advantage of the Church , and commendation of the party condescending, than if their had been more flicking, as we may fee in that praise-worthy instance of Basilius his carriage, who stuck on nothing, but absolutely did lay by what was contendedfor without respect to his own right or injury, for the Churches good. And oftentimes it's one party their wairing for the others condescention, or taking occasion from their tenacioulness to flick, that doth keep the distance at a height.

6. Oftentimes in such debates as are amongst orthodox Divines and Ministers, it seemeth they might be removed if one party should condescend according to the qualifications and cautions formerly laid down yea, it feemeth it were fafer for the Churchesgood in fuch a cafe, that either party should practically condescend to the way of the other, than that division should be keeped up upon such grounds. For, 1. It is not supposed here, that there is any matter of faith in question, amongst such, often there was full harmony in the Confessions of Faith, as in the instances circd. 2. There is no question for Government fimply, nor for Councils, and Canons, these also were acknowledged; none did disclaim the general Councils, nor their acts. 3. The question often is not amongs them. Whether others should be brought to their opinion of not, I mean as to the flick of the di-

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expression of another, or errout in some letter point of Truth; And, in such a case, it is that great Au-

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zustines word, Disputable errours, or uncertain faults: are not in their pursuit to be preferred to certain peace. Or, 2. It is for some particular act of Government or other milicarriages by milapplying of rules, or not walking according to them, or fomething of that kind, as was in contrary Ordinations of orthodox men, and fuch like: In which cases, we say, (and it will be found from History) That it had been ever better for the Church, that either fide had practically condescended to suffer the other to rule and govern, and personally to have keeped themselves free from accession to their guilt, whether of crookedness,

7. We may observe, that though in the primitive times there were diverse schisms and divisions, concerning Synods and Government, yet we will find that these contests and divisions did flow from the matter and particular acts and actings thereof, and that there was hardly ever division tabled upon the formality of the confitrucion of a Council or Synod; nor yet, that much difference was put betwixt declining of their authority, and of the Acts or Centures patt by them. Concerning which we may observe these generals.

negligence, or the like, than to have raised or enter-

tained divitions upon such accounts. For, often or-

thodox, and otherwayes blameless men, have been

made, by such divisions, factious and carnal in their

carriage, and much unuleful; who otherwayes, had

they been free of that rentation, might have proved

lober, and profitable; and, when the tentation was

over, were found to be such.

1. If the matter was right and fatisfying that was actings concluded by many Bishops and Church-men, there and not the was an acquiefcing in the authority thereof. 2. If formality the marter were displeating and hurtful, of whatever of Synods form it was, and of whatever number, its authority that occasiwas not much respected, because it consisted only in ened divi-

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adding weight to these things, as we may see in the drian Councils, which were often very numerous and others also that were erroneous, and otherwave corrupt, although there was no formal declinaton of them, or protestation against them as null; though there were fometimes fome diffentients in them, yet was not their authority any way confirmed by the forbearing of fuch Protestations or Declinarours. 2. Sometimes we will find worthymen appearing before and answering unto most corruptly constituted Synods, as was in those same times and although they were sentenced and deposed by them, yet did they never efteem these Sentences to have the more authority, as we may see in the case of Athanasius, chrysoftom, and many others. 4. Sometimes they did protest against Synods as null, when they faw violence and iniquity prevail in them as was done in the Council of antioch, in the case of Euftachius; and was done in the second Council of Ephesus by Flavianus and Anatolius. Sometimes also upon seen hazard, and defigns of professed corrupt enemies, Prorestations were drawn in writ antecedently; as in that Protestation which the Reformers in Germany gave out aginst the Councilos Trent, after its indiction; because there was no probable access for Truth to have liberty in speaking, and equity in judgment : And as Sleydan hath it fet down, they alleaged Cyrillus for the first pradiser of this, in the time that the Ariansprevailed. This we may see is their practice when they have to do with professed enemies; nor flicking on formalities, but onwhat was materiall. And again, amongst themselves, the Orthodox used not to flick upon the trying and scanning of the formality of any of mese Councils (for certainly in fuch corruptions as were fo universal, Synods corrupt for the plurality of them, might have been had with all the formalities and folempicies that could be required in the external conflictation of any lawfull Synod) but when they had occasion to meet, they went to the doing of what was for the prefent good

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of the Church, condemning the matter of fuch corrupt Synods ; which they did account lufficient in ch cases: And for difference amongst themselves, hen they were of a right temper, they did also enleavourto redress such particulars as needed, and to reflore persons unjustly sentenced, and the like; Whereby is appeareth that the matter both in things of general and particular concernment, did ever bear

most sway.

2. Although such debates, concerning Govern- Debattscon ment feem most easie to be removed, yet often and al- cerninggomost ever, they have been most difficultly healed, and vernment have been followed with greatest bitterness and con- more diffirendon in the Church; for, different Judgements cultly resimply, and also different Ceremonies, and different moved. practices in other things, many confift without direct opposition or counteracting, and may either be the more easily born or removed: but when it comes to Government, whose Sentence shall stand, whose Ordination shall be acknowledged, who shall have place to decide such and such things, and the like, it is far otherwayes. Hence it came to pass that men could keep union and communion with others that differed from them in far greater points of Truth; but to persons that did not acknowledge their Authority, or did acknowledge those that did controvert with them thereanent they could by no means fo condescend: Because, in Government, mens own particular interest is more concerned than in points of Truth, and that inadvertently stealeth in upon men. 2. Because, in Government the question is not only for what is past, but there is a fear of what may come: Hence men that have some testimony in themselves that they are not ambitious of Government, yet having taken up a prejudice against others, they are suspicious that if such had power, they would miscarry, not only in reference to them, but in reference to publick concernment. And therefore in removing such a division that is in point of Government, the great difficulty is not to much to TEN to the doing of what has not she precent good

heal and femove what is part as to prevent the le of what may come, il fuch continue to govern. An this maketh, that the result of such division is. The either they themselves, or such as they have our dence in particularly, may have the weight of vernment upon them , which may indeed be aim at with some fincerity; because being someway all nated with prejudice, they do not think it fit for d good of the work, at least during that time, that an others should have such trust, and this made the h of debates in the time of division, to break out man ly in the ordination of Bishops, and planting Churches; because by that means their interest in the government was keeped up, whereby there was after accesse to the management of every other thing ac cording as this fucceeded.

CHAP. VIII

Some preparatory endeavours for uniting.

Lthough we have been fornewhat large in these generals, because of the falling in o leveral things, yet we conceive it may be use full to the point, and we may have the speedier progresse afterward in looking this great question. What an orthodox Church divided in itself in some circumftantiall truths (to speak to) or contrar practices and actings, when ftill agreeing in the fundamentals of Doctrine, Worthip, Discipline and Government, and having mutual effects of the inregrity one of another : What, I fay, such are called to do for the healing of that breach? In referenocto which, these things, or this method would

Walking be followed under an . All, especially Ministers, would walk under impression the impression of the dreadfulness and rerribleness al ofibedread fuch a plague ; Iris like , if God were looked to as the julueffe of angry are Church , and at Ministers in such a time, suchaplague men would be in the greater fitness to speak concern-

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a healing. Some time therefore would be bestowe if this, to let that confideration fink down in the foil, that the Lords hand may be taken up therein; the many fad confequents thereof would be reprefered to the mind, and the heart would be feriously feeted and humbled therewith, as if fword, peftilence or fire were theatned; yea, as if the Lord were foreging in Ministers faces, rubbing shame upon them. & threatning the making of them despicable, the blastfine of the Ordinances in their hands, the loofing the erdle of their loins, and authority amongst the people, the plucking up of the hedges to let in Boars and Wolves to spoil the Vines, and destroy the flock and in a word, to remove His candleftick, fo that Ministers or other persons in such a case, have not only men that are their oppofirs to look to as angry at them, but they have the Lord to look to as their party whose anger hath thus divided them; and the not observing of this, maketh men the more confident under such a judgement; Whereas, seing it is a plague, men, even luch as suppose themselves innocent, as to the immediate rife thereof, ought to humble themfelves under the mighty hand of God, with respect to this as to other plagues.

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2. Men would also look upon it as a snare; O A searful how many tentations have fuch divisions accompa- snare indinying them, especially to Ministers; and also how vision. many afflictions, croffes and reproaches, upon the back of these! Might it not make a Minister tremble to think upon the matter of division, that now befide all his former difficulties and ftraits, there is a mare and triall in every thing; in every Sermon that he preacheth it is thus, left his own affection freal in for the zeal of God, to make him hoter and more vehement against those that oppose himin such things that are controverted, then he uleth to be in things more nearly concerning to the glory of God, and left by discovering his carnalnesse, he make his Minister many rules. Try despicable before others, when he heareth he is in any had to

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there be no contradiction, he is in hazard to t leffe weight upon what might be for his edification because it is spoken by one who in such and su things differreth from him. When he is in any lu catory, there is a tentation waiting on, by the le motion of such things, to discompose all, and ma fuch meerings feandalous and burdenfome; by th all converfing almost becometh heartless and con fortless, the most intimate brother is either suspicio or suspected; all constructions of mens ingenuity fincerity in any thing, are, for the most part, grou ded upon mens interefts, as if men after that had i conscience of finning, there is a failing of sympath amongst brethren, &c. And may not these and ma ny fuch like, make Ministers circumspect in such case, that they may be flow to speak to what ma foment division, and wary in hazarding upon inare Alas, it is unlike this, when men use more confidence and liberry in constructing, speaking and acting, and with less tenderness in times of division than at other times; and were men once impressed with the sear of finning upon the occasions of divisions, they would be much more dispoled for speaking of union.

Diligent condition.

3. Ministers and others would soberly retire to viewing of take a view of their own spiritual condition, and ourinward fee if they have keeped their own vineyard: and particularly, before the Lord, put themselvs to these. I. How union with him hath been prized, and if there bath been fludying to be, and abide, in Christ and to keep themselves in the love of God. 2. It there be any ground of quarrell in the present strain or bygone practice, that might have influence to provoke the Lord to smite them in the generall. Of 2. and especially, If by their negligence and unfaithfulnelle, imprudency, heat, paffion, tenaclouineffe, addictedness to other men, and too much loathnesse to displease them, prejudice at, and uncharitablenesse unto others, or the like, they have been any way accellory to the bringing in of this evil; for which cause they would take a view both of the fins that procure

re it and the evils which do dispose for it, and create it. (which were formerly mentioned) and would be impartial and through in this; for , it is prepolierous for men to meddle in removing publick differences, while they know not how it frandeth with themselves.

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4. When that is done there would be repentance Repentance fultable to what is found, and extraordinarly humi- fultable. liation and fecret prayer to God, not only for them-

felves and for their own particular condition, but for the publick, and particularly for healing of that breach, and that thereby God would spare His people, and not fuffer His inheritance to be a reproach. It is no little furtherance to union, to have men in a spiritual abstracted and mortified frame; for, we are fure, if it remove not difference, it will in a great part moderate the division, and referain the carnalnesse that usually accompanies hit, and dispose men to be more impartial to hear what may lead further.

3. Men would not faft in this, but as they have insereft, and are led by their places, they would endeavour foberly, warily and ferioufly, by speaking, writing, obtesting and otherwayes, to commendunion to these that differ ; yea, even they that differ, would commend it to these that differ from them. We see the Apostles do this frequently in the New Testament, and that not only in the general to Churches, but some persons are particularly by name obrefted; as, Philip.4.2. And in the primitive times, Bishops and Churches who were not engaged, did feriously write, and sometimes did fend some of their one upon annumber to Churches and eminent persons that were divided, and often their interpoling did prove effectu-Al. And when that difference between Augustineand ferome did come to some height, he (to wir, Angufline) pressed himself so on the other for the begeting of a better understanding, and the abating of that difference, that he did prevail with him and by their mutual apologies, and better understanding ope of another, they came notwithflanding of their diffe-

union wouldby all warrantable means be commenuntoand presed upon thefe that differ. and by those that differ

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rence to have much respect one of another. Hor this end Policarous came from Afia to Rome to flay thedi vision about Hafter, which prevailed so far, that it fifted for a time. Also men, especially of the same judgement, would deal with others, with whom die that they agree, to be condescending, and serious obtest them; and when they exceed, would objurgate them for the Churches good. This is often of great weight, and often also, men that appear mol in a difference, will be hoter and carry things further of. than leffe engaged men of the same judgement will fiv allow, and such ought not to be filent in such a case. Thus Ireneus (though of Victors judgement in the comatter of Easter) yet did boldly exposulate with an him for his vehemency in preffing of the fame, to the ing hurr of the Churches peace, charging him to forbeat his and to follow union notwithstanding, which act of in his, is still highly commended, and (as Enfebrus ob per ferveth) counted answerable to his name.

Constancy neffe berein.

6. Serious and fingle thoughts of union would be led and fingle- laid down, and that would be purposly driven as the great duty; fo that endeavours would not principal ly tend to strengthen a side, or exoner themselves, or get advantage of others, &c. but to make one of both and therefore when on mean or occasion faileth, and ther would be effayed; neither would men wear or faint herein, although it prove often a most faint ing bufineffe.

derneße and respect,

7. Men would endeavour all this with tenderness and respect to mens persons, actions and qualifications; for, oftentimes the rife of a division, is in the alienation of affections between some persons; which afterward disposeth to confiruct hardly both of their opinions and actions: and indeed often the flickis here, that mens affections are not fatisfied one with another, and that maketh them that they do not trul each other: Hence we fee, that in the Scripture, the commending of love, and of honouring and prefering of others in honour to our felves, is ordinarily fubjoyned to the exhortations to union, or reproof

of division.as, Philip.2. Eph. 4. Matth. 18, Gt. And we fee in the primitive times, when no mean could cure schisms, one party shewing respect to another. or to some eminent head of the opposite party, (itmay be even after their death)did alley the fame, and engage these that formerly shunned communion, to joyn with them. It is particularly observed. That enol when at Constantinople some had continued separated molt from the Billiops government, and the Church therereher of after Chryfostom's deposition, for the space of thirty t will five years, and were called Johanits; yet Proclus. case, who by some interval succeeded in that See, by rewith and making honourable mention of him, and bringo the ing his body from the place where it it was buried in rbeat his exile, and burying it honourably at Constantinople act of in the great Church of the holy Apostles, did so apus ob peafe and engage those that had disclaimed all the interveening Bishops, that instantly they did acknowld be ledge him and joyn with the Church. The like alfo as the is mentioned to have been the end of that Schifm at Antioch because of Eustachius his removal from them. when callaudion the Bishop did return his body honourably to be buried, and went out with his party to receive the fame folemnly some miles from the Town: those also, who out of respect to him (to wit Euflachius) had continued (eparated from the fucceeding Bishops for above an hundred years, now. feeing the adverse party put respect on him, they also did from that time forth joyn with them. Both these are recorded in the fifth Century; and if respect to dead men be prevalent to engage affections, certainly mutual respect and evidences of confidence amongst men living, would be much more weighty. This giving of respect would be manifested in these and the like. 1. Respective mentioning in word or writ of the persons, and what concerns those that differ, especially such as are most eminent and leading amongst them. 2. There would be good constructions pur upon their end and intentions, and fincerity, 7 2 cven

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even in fuch actions as are displeasing. 3. Mona opioions and actions would not be loaded with grolle absurdicies and high aggravations, especially in publick; because that rendeth but to make them odious and flandeth in the way of a future good underflanding, when one hath proposed another as so absurd? All personal reflections and hareful a person. 4. would be abstained, as also fleighting answers, difdainful-like words and falutations, and fuch like, would be flunned; But on the contrary, there would, be love, familiarity, rendernesse : and if there have been any reflection or bitternelle tooccasion mislake. yea, if it have been unjustly apprehended, there would be condescending to remove the same. I have heard of a worthy perion, who being led away in an hour of tentation, was by many of his former friends afterwards discountenanced, whereby he was, as it were. engaged in a kind of discontent tomefend his deed. and refent the difrespect of such persons, which almost grew to a renr: but having occasion to encounter one who was most opposite to his present way, who yer notwithhanding of all, did lovingly and famili-arly, as ever, imbrace him, without mentioning any fuch thing; it is faid, That his heart melted infrantly with the conviction of his former opposition, and so any further proceduretowards a rent was prevented, when he fawthere was yet again accesse to the affections of the most eminent of those he did differ from. s. There would be expressions of mutual confidence

Expressions of mutual confidence.

5. There would be expressions of mutual considence in one another, which would appear not only in personal respects, but with respect to the Ministery of such as they differ from, endeavouring to strengthen and consirm that, which was the thing that endeared Basilius to Eusebius, that even while be differed, he endeavoured to have his Ministery weighty amongst the people. 6. Respect would be shewen to men of that judgement and side (it being such a difference as is supposed) they would be helped and surthered, and counted, not with slanding thereof (if otherwayes qualified (fit for trust and charge; for, this is not only

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only engaging of a particular person, but of all the party, and doth hold forth a confidence in them notwith handing of that; whereas the contrary is difoblidging and irritating of all because it proposeth all of fuch an opinion or practice to be unworthy of charge or truft, which no man can well digeft; and it fome way necessitateth them in a divided way to endeavour some other way of entring, and to increase their distidence of them who so partially (in their efteem at least) manages matters, and prefers the firengthening of a fide, to the edification of the Church; as any different party cannot but expound it. leing they feem to themselves to have some perswafion of their own integrity in the main work. 7. There would even be mutual vifits and fel- Kind vifits lowfhip, civil and christian, as hath been; yea, rather it would be increased; for if men have some confidence that others love their persons, respect them as Ministers, and esteem of them as Christians, they will be eafily induced to trust the other as such also. 8. If reflections and bitternelle be vented by fome(as even good men are too ready to include to themselves a liberty in debate to exceed in this)yet there would be no such meeting given. Luther is censured for execeding in this even by such as loved him; and it is a most excellent advertisement that Calvin giveth to Bullenger and others, thus provoked by him, Epift. 57. That either they would not answer such a Paper at all, or, in answering it, to remember, That they had a most eminent servant of Christ to answer, and fonot to be provoked by his vehemency, feing he alfo had corruptions; and thus expresseth his own refolution. Etiamfi me Diabolum vocaret me tamen hoc illi bonoris babiturum, at infignem Dei fer vum agnofcam, &c. It is upon this ground, that Augustine and others, most zealously affected with the schism of the Donatifts, yer because they keeped in other things sound in the Faith, they mention such of them as were sober, very honourably, and carried to them very brotherly; and particularly he nied to visit their Bishops, if he had been

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been going elsewhere for Ordination or other affairs and lome of them also used to visit him, whom he enterrained most kindly ever speaking to improve both for begetting a better understanding, as may be gathered from inflances cited out of his Epiftles in what is before and after this. .. Sometimes also when he wrote to some of them he defired them to write fo to him, as he might acquaint his people with both their Writings, and with his own, if they returned no Anfwer, that thereby he might confirmin them to reasonablenesse, ver faith, it shall be past Difcessum mittetum, that it might appear he intended not to make them odious. He doth also observe that a main thing that made the Donatifts averse from yeelding to union, was suspicion which they had, that the Catholicks would ftill persecute them if they had occasion, speaking of a Conference, Epist. 163. he faith, Dictum erat (meaning of the Donatifis) quod adhuc noftri eos persecuturi esent; which he with many words rejecteth, shewing from Eph. 4. that they had learned to keep union with forbearance : elsewhere also, as Epift. 147. he excuseth the too great vehemency of the expressions of some that were on his own side in that difference. All which sheweth the great needsity that there is to recover affections in the preffingof union, and how far men ought to condescend in reference thereto both in order to what is past and for the preventing of what may be feared,

Stirring up 8. The Ministers would not only in their own to the life practice, but in their doctrine, and otherwayes, stir and practice up others to the practice and life of Religion. We of Religion. ever find the Apostle useth this way upon the backof his exhortations to union, to press the working out

of their salvation with sear and trembling, &cc. And in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, when he dehorts Ministers from soolish and jangling questions, strifes and contentions, this remedy is either premitted or subjoyned, that they would presse the Believers to be zealous of good works, and careful to maintain these, Tit. 3.8.9. That they would follow after love, righ-

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teopfnesse, faith, peace with them that call on the Lord our of a pure heart, 2 Tim. 2.22,22. for, when either Ministers or Professors are exercised and takenup with these things, there is little accesse to other things: then also they discern the necessity of union the more, and are the more disposed for it themselves, and others are the more eafily induced to unite with them. Befide, it is never in fuch things that godly and orthodox men do differ, but it is in diverting from these; and therefore often much heat in particular differences, carrieth with it, a decay and lukewarmnesse in more practical things; As on the contrary, zeal in these material things, doth ordinarily alley and mitigate heat and fervour in the other.

9. It is fit that there were solemn addresses to God Solemn adfor directing and guiding in the way to this end; for, He is the God of peace, and ought to be acknowledged in removing this great evil of division: Hence the Apostle subjoyneth prayers for peace, unto his exhortations thereto; and we are commanded to pray for Ferufalems peace, even Church-peac no leffe than Civil peace: It may be that the neglect of this is the cause that sound, godly and peaceable men, who love the welfare of Zion, do yet continue divided, and cannot fall upon means of healing, that thereby the necessity of the Lords interposing may be discerned, and that there may be purposed addresses for this same thing, and that men may not undervalue the thing, nor their adversaries in it, so as not to account it a rod, leing it is God they have to do with, nor be content to lye under it without aiming and dealing to have it removed by Him, as we would deal for the removal of any temporal plague, or expect a bleffing upon this Gospel.

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CHAP. IX.

what things are to be forborn in order to uniting.

Aving laid down these general helps, we are now to confider what is yet to be forborn and about stained from in reference to union: For, as ordinarily divisions rife and are fomented from and by doing and driving of some things, which others cannot concur in, or come up to ; So when such things are abstained from, there is the nearer accesse to union; at least, it stoppeth the imperuousuelle of division, and maketh it to look liker a difference, which (confidering humane infirmity) is neither to intolerable in it felt, nor hurtful to the Church, Befide therefore what hath been faid for abstaining of personal reflections, or what may irritate persons, or parties, or what may entertain jealoufie or diffidence amongst them, whereof something hath been touched upon, We shall add these things further.

Avoiding of all things thatweaken thereputationof others.

1. All things that contribute to weaken the repute of others, or to beget an hard impression of themin our felves or in others, in the general, would be forborn; such as telling of reproachful reports, even though they be true, much more if they be but reported, yea, or the hearing of such with any delight. endeavouring to waken up discontents in others against opposites, by such informations, folicitations and the like. These are condemned in private mens carriages, and are the causes of continuing such differences (for, where no tale-bearer is, firife ceafeth, Prov. 26.) much more amongst Ministers who ought not to walk as men. Also good heedwould be raken to fuch as may have influence on advices, counfels and resolutions to that purpose, lest underhand-whifperers, who really may mind some further alteration in the Church, and may really be imbittered at honest men for their honesty, th uld vet infinuat them-Evil counfel felves with eminent men on both fides, and fo carry

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on the division, and disappoint the union; As for inflance, Some, nor alregether purged from Arianim. and imbittered at honest Bishops, as Athanasius Ofices and others, did fleat in upon the one fide of a debate. and held on the controversie against faithful men; So Epiphanius was entangled by Theophilus of Alexan. dria to oppole Chryfostome upon pretext of another difference; Sometimes again, on the other fide fuch as inclined to the Novatians, wanted not influence to ftrengthen the opposite party, and to keep them at a greater distance from the other, as being groffe in receiving Traditores f as they called them) unto their fociety. Sometimes men justly confured, or fearing censure from fairhful Bishops, did ipread calumnies against them, and made them odious, under prevext of their pride, arrogance, unfoundnesse and such like. even unto other orrhodox men; Sometimes again, time lerving men, by flattering Magistrates did execare their revenge against faithful Bishops, by keeping up Divisions against them, driving on Sentences of Deposition, and such like, under presext of other faults; whereby the Churches peace hath been often marred and her divisions continued, as is clear in those schisms and divisions at Constantinople, first, in reference to Chrifoftom, and afterward in reference to unatius, who, by a faction in the Church, was deposed. really to pleafe the Emperour, whole inceftuous marriage he would not approve as they did : therefore I lay in the removing of differences, and resolving of duties in reference to union, there is greatneed of circumpedinesse in trying and choosing whose counsels are to be laid weight upon; for, all men love not peace, neither feek fingly the good of the Church, and want not their own prejudices and grudgings at particular eminent persons (who where men are not very denied and mortified) will eafily freal-in to mara publick good, under pretext of particular respect to the person, whom, by so doing, they stir up. It's marked by Sleydan as the cause of that unreasonable and unatural division that break-out and grew in

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General almost to the undoing of Religion thereins betwixt the Elector of Sazony, and Maurice afterward Elector, that some Counsellors not well-minded to Religion, but favourers of the wicked way of Henry, to whom Maurice succeeded, who for that cause had harred at the Elector and those who were eminent for Reformation, and now having taken on a pofession, and infinuated themselves in the counsels and affection of Maurice and finding some begun matter of diffention in other particulars, did fo kindle and fofter it, till they brought the division to that height, that one part of the Protestants were engaged with Antichrist and his followers to destroy the other; and yet fo clofly carried, that the difference was never flared upon the real account, which indeed such did intend; Also men not so nearly concerned in the Churches divisions as suppose they be of another Church or men not fo immediately concerned in the debates thereof. and the effects that follow thereupon; As in that Council of carthage, they enact that tendernesse be used to the Donatists, and means be used to reclaim them; and for that end did acknowledge their Ministers, though or dained in schism, to be Ministers, although the Church of Rome did write otherwayes to them, and didact other wayes themselves: These would be looked unto. Sometimes also there are a fort of persons who long not for union; for, as there is an itching after new doctrine in some, so is there for divifions and changes amongst others, who may be found in doctrine, who in this are to be adverted to.

Rerbearing toengage judicially DEO or con.

2. Men would eschew in such a case judicially to engage in such differences, either by passing decisions in these things pro or contra in Judicatories, or by censuring, or noting with any reproach such as differ from them. For, 1. that maketh the division the more difficultly removably in it self. And, 2. it engageth both sides the more, and proveth a let to retiring when men would, and highteneth the difference exceedingly. In that difference that was between Cyprian and Stephanus, and other Bishops of

Rome.

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Rome, concerning the rebaptizing of such as had been baporzed by Hereticks and Schilmaticks, It is marked that Stephanus did prefle the condemnation of it. did centure and refuse communion with such as joyned with Cyprian in his opinion: On the contrary, Eprian did indeed call Synods and decide, but neither prefled any man to his opinion or practice, nor Centured any that differed in such a matter; And because his carriage is so much commended by the Ancients, especially by Augustine, against the Donatists, nor because he counted cyprian right on the matter; for he disclaimed that, and owned the contrary opinion: but because he carried in his opinion so tenderly to the Churches union and peace. We shall observe two or three passages of his, and of Augufines concerning him. I. In his Epiftle ad Jubannum, He crescripfimus, inquit, nemini prescribentes aut prajudicantes qua minus unu qui que Episcoporum, quod putat faciat. Et ne quisquam pellendus à cæterorum confortio videretur (decit)nos quantum in nobis estpropter bæreticos cum collegis & Coepiscopis nostris non contendimus cum quibus divinam concordiam & pacem tenemus. Et Paulo poft, Serventur (inquit) à nobis patienter & leniter charitas animi, collegii honor, vinculum fidei, concordia facerdotii. Which words and many others are cited by Augustine de Baptismo, lib. 6. cap. 17. And in another place, when he hath cited the same last Sentence and other words, giving the reason which the Apostle hath, 1 Cor. 11. If any man will be contentious, we have no such custome, nor the Churches of God: after which a little, Augustine lubjoyneth this approbation of his carriage; Majus quippe in eo robur, virtutis eminuit, cum ida queftio nondum discusa nutaret, quod aliter sentiens quam multi collegæ, tantam moderationem obtinuit, ut Eccle fie Dei fanctam focietatem, nulla schismatis labe trancaret, quam si omnia non solum veraciter, fed etiam pariter fine ifta virtute fentiret ; De Baptismo, lib. 5. cap. 17. This he faith, even though Cyprians opinion was confirmed by diverse Councels of Carthage. Which sheweth what influence such ab-

abstinence bath on the Churches peace, which is the more observable, that he used this forbearance when he had the generality of the Church of Africk, and the authority of their Councels for him; and allowas provoked by the vehemency of his oppofits, and their Censuring such as were of his opinion; yet he forbare, not because he doubted of the soundness of his judgement, but because he respected the Churches peace, and even then did he write sweetly in many Epiftles, and a particular treatife, preffing the unity of the Church; for which he is eminently esteemed of as an excellent pattern in fuch a case by all sober and judicious men.

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Abstaining from propagatingtheir opinions fa-Stiousty.

3. In such cases when union is desired men would abstain the propagating of their opinions in any purposed and publick way. This is not to restrain a mans fober, christian and necessary vindicating of himself in a due way. But, I. All unnecessary traffick that is principally for strengthening of a party. 2, Publishing in print, things to that purpose, when there is no coveniency for the Churches good. Making motions in Judicatories that awakens fiding. 4. Infifting thereon in publick preaching. And, lattly, (When there is some necessity to speak or write on such things) all reflections and irritations, would be abstained ; yea, it is fit that some. times every word spoken, or written upon one side, should be past over by the other, without reply, for peaces take. Becaule, 1. the broader such differences spread, they take the deeper root, and increase fiding more amongst the people. 2. Because, they irritate more and keep off men from thinking of 2. Because the memory of these things is ready to riffle mens minds. Therefore most eminent men have wished that all Papers pro or contra in such differences might be buried; for, one difference begetteth another, and one paper draweth forth another, none being willing that his adversary should have fuep the last word; and oftentimes papers propagate a controversie to a succeeding generation, to whom it Para the

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had been good that many things had never been in with Alfo often, fuch writings prove edifying to few, and they but make Church-division the subject of more discourse, and Ministers to be the more contemprible; and do in themselves often involve many contradictions against one another, which readily are not possible to be cleared in matters of fact, and reflections one upon another; which derogateth exceedingly from the honour of the Ministery. marked of constantine, that when at the Council of Nice, there were many opposit papers of differences amongst Bishops presented, he took them, and having gravely admonished the Bishops for their contending amongst themselves, would not have one of them read, but faid, he would cover fuch infirmities as they were bringing to light, by their contradictions, with his purple. This way also hath been followed for flopping of divisions in diverse reformed Churches.

4. All contrary acting would be abfrained, as in E. Contrary lections, Ordinations, or the like, because these fix, acting as with a nail, the difference, as may be gathered from history. It were better many a time for the Churches good, that any one fide had fuffered the Bithop, ordained by the other, folely to possesse the place or that none had been ordained at all than that opposit Ordinations had been; because, that so the Church was divided even in communion, and fuch particulars have been difficultly composed, and ever exceedingly inftrumentall to continue a breach, and it led men in Congregations to be factious, and to ng of feek to gain men and affections to their party.

5. All separated and divided meetings would be Separated inent eschewed, whether the seperation be totall in respect meetings to of all Ordinances and communion in generall, as beefchewed. ce be- sometimes divisions have come amongst orthodox other, men to such a height; Or whether it be partiall have Inspose in Government, Sacraments, &c. or any of gate I there; because so not only way is made to a totall feom it paration, but thereby there is a divided shape put had upon the one Church, and occasion is given for one

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party to condemn another, and fo to beget more firife and especially because it habituateth men to think themselves not of one body, and, as it were, erecteth a Church or Altar against another (as the Fathers were wont to speak) and so becometh a drawn line of divifion and doth really make the difficulty of niting the more difficult; because ere union be made And feva- up, that partition must be pulled down. It is fit thererared Fafts, fore that either all such occasions of Fafts &c. wherein all cannot joyn, should be forborn; or that they be so ordered, as there may be union in

Alts Principles laying

them. 6. Such acts and princples as put referaint u pon either fide making others incapable of Church-truft 76- or the like or which declareth them to be fo, would fraints up be prevented; and if established, would be orderly eneitherside removed; because such things make a partition betwixt two, and heighten such a difference beyond the nature thereof: Also they evidence much prejudice and alienation of mind, and they feem to confirming men to an union, which is never right if it be not voluntary. Hence we see that the great friends of peace have ever endeavoured to prevent or remove such; in theinftances of Policarp, Iraneus and Cyprian, is clear, who did not only endeavour to remove Censures, but even centurablenesse from persons so differing. This also is very obliging to the opposite party. In that 162. Epiftle of Augustines (which is much to this purpose) mention is made of one cenethlius, a Catholick Bishop, who (faith he) was much esteemed of by the Donatiffs, Quod conftitutionem datam contra eos, coma prefferet, & effectum babere non fiverit.

CHAP. X.

what is to be done in order to uniting.

Now we may be the shorter in speaking to what Is to be done in reference to particular differences, leing much may be gathered from these generais premitted, and it is not our purpose to be par-I. That ticular; Yet we fay,

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oarhat BAREA A TRACTIC That is the duty of fuch to be feeking union Steking one with another, and for that cause to be making Meetings: offer of, and defiring meetings and conferences, and to be urging harmony one upon another. In that Council of Carthage, whereof Aurelius was Moderator. they did appoint Conferences to be fought for with the Donatifts, although they had been long in a Schism: and for that end did appoint Commissioners, and did give inflructions to go from place to place, and to endeavour a fettlement, whereof these were be prejudicial to none; That Ministers and Bishops dicione fhould continue in their charges if otherwayes, they were worthy notwithflanding of their former separation: which is observed not to have wanted fruit in many places, as the acts and events are recorded by Balfamon. And this is according to the general rule of following peace, even when it feemeth to fly from men; And questions that may engender strife are to be avoided and fled from, when they feem to follow after men, because, as Paul saith, 2 Tim. 2.22. &c. The servant of the Lord must not strive, &c. On this ground we find, that many of Augustines Epistles direct to Donatists and others; are to this purpose, craving friendly communings; and when he hath had occasion to be in cities where Donatist-Bishops were, he used to visit them, and enter conference friendly with them; and if any hope was, he wrote to others to entertain the fame, as particularly may be gathered from Epist. 147, where he honourably mentioneth Promelianus in the defire of a conference; and because he knew the too great vehemency of one Evodius, though of his own fide, had offended him, he did excuse it, saying amongst other things, Id bominis at ati ignoscendum est, &c. The like he also hath, Epist. 163. where he mentioneth

Fortunius, whom he had conferred with, with this tefilmony to these he writeth to, Quantum enim arbitror

difficillime potestisinvinire in Episcopis vestristam utilem

animum, & voluntatem, quam in ifto fene perspeximus; And

And therefore preffeth them to entertain the begun conference, though he might not flay.

ings.

2. In carrying on fuch meetings, refpect would be of carrying had to union in the ordering of every circumstance: onfuchmeet - as in the persons chosen, that they may be men inclined to peace, respected by the other party concerned in the Churhes differences, and free of the fuspicions formerly hinted, and fuch like, left by an intended union there follow a greater rent and division, as oftentimes hathbeen feen in conferences amongfidiffentient men. Here also a special respect would be had to the expressing of mutual benevolence in words and carriages, left fome hard impression seize on men at the entry. Choise also would be made of the subjett first to be spoken of; as what may be thought most subject to mistake, heat or contention, would be left to the laft place; and what may be conceived more plaufible-like to both, would be begun at, that it may be rather known wherein men agree, than wherein they differ, at the entry at leaft. Pollibly alfo union in fundamental things, being accorded unto, it may make way for moderating affections in other things leffe fundamental. This method was ever urged by Bucer, Beza and other Reformers, who keeped conferences at first with the Lutherian party; because, beginning at some point of Doctrine, or particular in practice, wherein the difference is higheft, doth often at the entry rifle mens humours, and break off conferences abruptly with the more hear, asexperience in these debates at that time did make too too manifest.

Contention about formalities to be forborn.

3. Such meetings for conference would be ferioufly and condescendingly improved for the end defigned: As, 1. protractings of time, or janglings about circumfrances would be eschewed; as also tenaciousneffe, and contentiousnesse about formalities of proceeding, and particular infifting upon contradictions in matters of fact, because such things become not, the gravity and feriousnesse of men aiming at such an end, But the main businesse would be soberly and serioufly

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rioully gone about, and that timoully; for men should not meet to take advantage one of another by such formalities, but to procure the good of the Church. 2. Criminations, or objecting of personal faults one crimination to another or difference in particulars, would either ons. be altogether for born, or left to the last place, and the main matter would be first handled, and particulars accordingly squared. 3. There would be condescending to follow some circumstances, even though they feem not fo reasonable, left by the wilful adhering of one partyto a circumstance, the end be disappointed; yea, sometimes more material things, at lest til there be a better understanding begotten, are to be ceded in when it may be without fin if to be it may contribute for the carrying on of fuch a defign, and we will almost ever find these that are most tender of the Churches good to be most condescending in all these; As amongst other instances, we will find in that conference between the Catholicks and Donatifts, at which Augustine was present, and which is fer down by him; ing. wherein, amongst other things, these are clear, That not only the Catholicks fought the meeting, but also pressed the speaking unto the main businesse. which the other did sometimes deny, saying, It was not lawful for the children of Martyrs to meet with the children of apostate or wicked men; and sometimes by formalities, jangling questions, they protracted time to eschew the main thing. 2. It is clear, that also the catholicks condescended to many of their fuits, and yeelded to account them Bishops, and did not contradict, but cede at the entry, that Churches should be rendred to these from whom they were taken, if so be that might have enclined them to union, and that even by benefits they might be mollified, and stood on no circumstantial thing with them. Such meetings have often been disappointed withfuch vain janglings, especially when numbers have been confuledly admitted, and when each party hath charged

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Themosttender of the Church, most condescend-

another with former miscarriages, As Augustine obfarveth

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ferveth, Epift. 163. and therefore hath that word to them Neque nos illis debere objicere fuorum feelera neque illes nobis. And, because the Donatists upbraided the Catholicks (as the orthodox are called in all diefe debates) that they were guilty of perfecuting them. because they had proceeded to some Semences, and procured commission from Civil powers against them to put them from their charges. (Thele times they called tempora Macariana, because of such a person that was eminent in the executing thereof) And again. the Catholicks used to object to them, beside their schism, Headinesse, irregular violences, and the like. because of the practices of the Circumcellions, who having fallen off with the Donatists, went also in many absurdities beyond them; therefore when he is preffing a conference, Epist. 203. Tollamus (faith he) inania objecta, nec tu objectas tempora Macariana, nec ego fevitiam Circumcellionum. And in Epift. 107. faith.that in his conference with Fortunius, Placuit omnibus in talibus disputationibus violenta facta malorum bominum nobis ab invicem objici non debere. And there is no little furtherance or prejudice to a conference accordingly as this advice is followed or not, feing often fuch bygone particulars will heat more, than that which is of greater concernment in the main cause.

4. To make the instances more particular, the matter concerning which debate arises and falls to be the subject of the conference, may be distinguished, and so more clearly spoken unto: Which is, reither a difference in some doctrinal thing. Or, 2. some particular practice, or some personal miscarriage. Or, 3. something in Worship. Or, 4. some

thing in Government, or fuch like,

CHAP. XI.

what is to be done in closing doctrinal differences.

For doctrinal differences of judgement, there are three wayes to close them; (it is to be

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adverted, that the difference is not supposed to be in The first way any fundamental thing) First, By sober and lerious of conference, one party may bring another to the doffrinal fame judgement with them;or, both parties may quite differences fomething of extremities, and joyn in a middle opinion. This is the most solid union when men come to think and speak the same thing, and sometime hath been attained. Yet concerning this, we fay I. That all union is not to depend on this, as hath been faid. 2- It hath been very rarely attained, especially when difference hath spread and rooted it self by debating and contradiction, seing even good men have both infirmity and corruption. 3. We fay, that publick dispute, either by word or writ, hath never proven very uleful, even amongst good men, to attain this end, But ordinarily such debates have heightned the controversie, and engaged men more; so that if any thing prevail towards this, it is friendly, familiar conferences opening truth, rather than formal flated disputations; because in such men are (as it were) upon their guard, and fully do exercise their wit, in the other, the re is more access to inform the judgement, by a loving, grave, ferious manner of speaking of the truth, and that privately to others, especially to such as are of reputation for parts and ability, and that it be not done in vain, as Paul hath it, Gal. 2.2. And it's observable that he speaketh this in reference to his way, when he is intended the evidencing of his agreement with the chief Apostles in the matter of doctrine. Also we find meeknesse and instructing put together, when there is any expectation to recover one from a difference, 2 Tim. 2.15. and convincing or disputing is more especially aplicable to these of whom there is little hope, out of respect to the edification of others. Hence we find the Apostles disputing with falle teachers in some points of truth, but rather intreating and exhorting Believers to have peace amongst themselves, notwithstanding of lesser differences.

A fecond way of composure, is, when such agree-

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The ficend ment in judgement cannot be obtained, To endeavour way of com- a harmony and keep unity notwithflanding of the differences.

poling such difference, by a murual forbearance in things control verted : which we will find to be of two fores. The first is, to say so, total , that is , when neither fine dort fo much as doctrimally in word, writ, or Sentences of judicatories, prefic any thing that may confirm or propagate their own opinion, or condemic the contrary, But do altogether abstract from the lame out of respect to the Churches peace, and for the preventing of fcandal; and do in things wherein they agree according to the Apostle's direction. Philip.a. 16. Walk by the fame ride, and mind the fame things mutually, as if there were no fach differences, and waiting in these till the Lord shall reveal the same This way is fafe, where the doctrine upon which the difference is, is luch, as the forbearing the decision thereof, doth neither mar any dury that the Church in general is called to nor endanger the falvation of fouls through the want of clearneffe therein, nor, in a word, infer fuch inconveniences to the hurt of the Church, as fuch unfeafonable a wakening and keeping up of differences and divisions may have with it : Because the scope of bringing forth every truth; or confirming the fame by any authoritative fanction, &c. is the edification of the Church; and therefore when the bringing forth thereof doth deftroy more than edifie, it is to be forborn. Neither can it be ground enough to plead for fuch decisions in preaching, that the thing they preach-for is truth, and the thing they condemn is errour. Because, T. it is not the lawfulnefle of the thing fimply that is in question, but the necessity and expediency thereof in fuch a cafe; Now, many things are lawful that are not expedient, 1Cor. 10.22. 2. In these differences that were in the primitive times concerning meats, 3 dayes, genealogies, &c. there was a truth or an errour upon one of the fides, as there is a right and a wrong in every contradiction of such a kind, yet the Apostle thinketh fitter; for the Churches peace,

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that such be altogether refrained, rather than any way (ar least in publick) infifted upon 'or decided. 3. Becaule no Minister can bring forth every truth at all rimes, he must then make choice; and I suppole force Ministers may die, and all do so, who have not preached every truth, even which they knew, unto the people. Befide, there are (no question) many truths hid to the most learned. Neither can this be thought inconfiftent with a Ministers fidelity, who is to reveal the whole counsel of God; because, that counsel is to be understood of things necessary to mens falvation, and is not to be extended to all things wharfoever; for we find the great Apostle expounding this in that fame Sermon, Act. 20. ver , 20. I have keepea back nothing that was profitable unto you, which evidenceth that the whole counsel of God, or the things which he shewed unto them, is the whole, and all that was profitable for them, and that for no by re-spect or fear whatfoever he shunned to reveal that unto them. Allo, it is clear, that there are many truchs which are not decided by any judicial act : and amongst other things; sparingnesse to decide truths that are not fundamental judicially hath been ever thought no little mean of the Churches peace, as the contrary hath been of division.

The third way (which is the fecond fort of the former) of composure, is mixed, When there is some medling with such questions, yet with such forbearance, that though there be a seen difference, yet there is no schism or division, but that is seriously and tenderly prevented; as upon the one side, some may expresse their mind in preaching and writing on a particular question one way, others may do it differently; yet both with that meeknesse and respect to those they differ from, that it doth beger no rent, nor give just ground of offence, nor mar union in any other thing; Or, it may possibly come to be decided in a Synod, yet with such forbearance upon both sides, that it may prove no prejudice to union; those who have authority for them, not pressing it to the

The third way of composing such differences.

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prejudice of the opinion, names, consciences of the other, or to their detriment in any respect : but allowing to them a liberty to speak their minds, and walk according to their own light in such particulars: And on the contrary, the other refting fatisfied in the unity of the Church, without condemning them; or pressing them to condemn themselves; because so in deed their liberty is no leffe then the others who have the decision of a Synod for them ! And thus men may keep communion and union in a Church, even where by the Judicatories thereoffome leffer not fundamental errour, which doth allo infer unwarrantable practices is authoritatively concluded. We have a famous instance of this in the Church of Africa in in the dayes of cyprian, which by the Ancients hath ever been so much esteemed of. There was a difference in that Church concerning the Rebaptizing of Hereticks and Schismaticks after their conversion, or, of such as had once fallen into them; Cyprian and the greatest part thought their first Baptism null, or, by their fall, made void; others thought it not fo, who were the leffer part, yet right asto this particular; There was Writings on both fides for defence of their Also in a Council of near three hundred Bishops, it is judicially and authoritatively concluded; yet that Synod carriedfo, as they did not only not censure any that differted nor presentem to conform in practife to their judgement; but did also entertain most intimat respect to them, and familiarity with them, as may be gathered from what was formerly hinted. And upon the other fide, we do not find any in that Church making a schiss upon the account of that judicial erroneous decision (though at least by three several Synods it was ratified)but contenting themselves to have their consciences free by retaining their own judgement, and following their own practice, till time gave more light and more occafion to clear that truth. And we will never find in the Writings of any time, more affection amongst brethren, and more respect to peace, than was in that Church

Church at that time amongst those that differed; And mere is not any practice more commended in all the Church-history and Writings of the Fathers, than this practice; as partly may be gathered from what was formerly touched out of Augustine. And if we will confider the case rationally, we will find that it is not impossible to have union in a Church where there is in such a difference an authoritative decision, even Suppoling that fide, on whichthe errour lies, to be approved. For, I. There is no necessity for such as have authority for them, to presse others in there judgeor practice in such things; neither can it be thought that fuch a decision can of it self satisfie all scruples, neither yet that men doubtingly may follow: Nor, laffly, that fuch controversies can bear the weight of troubling the Church, by censuring such as otherwayes may be faithful, seing sometimes even unfaithful men have been spared with respect to the Churches good, as hath been faid. And, secondly, upon the other fide, such a constitution of a Church, doth not involve all that keep communion therein, in the guilt thereof, if personally they be free : as in the inflance of the Jewish Church is clear : where, no question many corrupt acts have been established, yet did it neither make communion in Worship or Government to be unlawful, where the matter and manner of carriage was lawlus. Befide, this would infer, that no Judicatory could keep union, where there were contrary votes, or a Sentence past without unanimity: because that is certainly wrong to them who think otherwayes, and if fo, there could be no Judicatory expected either in Church or State; for, it cannot be expected, that they shall be still unanimous, or, that the greater part shall cede to the lesser, and rescind there own act. Also, suppose there should be such a division upon one difference, can it be expected that those who unite upon the divided sides respectively, shall again have no more difference amongst themselves? and if they have, shall there not be a new division? and where shall this end? And feing

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feing men must resolve to keep unity where thereare faults of fuch a nature, or to have none at all it is as good to keep it at first, as to be necessitated thereto afterward. The Orthodox urge this argument against the Donatists, who would not keep union with them. because of pretended corruptions in the proceedings of Judicatories and ordinations; yet were constrained to bear with such amongst themselves, and particularly to receive, and unite with the Maximinianifts, whose communion they had once rejected. though a branch of their own faction, because they faw no end of division if they did not resolve to difpeafe with such things amongst themselves. And Augitine often afferreth, that they were never able to answer this argument when it was propounded to them, to wit, Why they did not give them that same latitude, in keeping communion with them, which they had given to the Maximinianifts, who were guilty of such things as they imputed to them? We conceive then, that even in such a case there may be union for profecuting the main work of the Gospel notwithstanding of such a circumstantial difference, if men otherwayes fet themselves to it; and the general grounds, formerly laid down, do confirm this.

CHAR XII.

What to do for union in points not doctrinal, but about matters of fact or personal faults.

If the difference be not doctrinal in point of judgement, at least only, but being in matter of sact, as personal saults and corruptions, whereby the one is ready to object to the other some bypast failings, and miscarriages: whereupon by inconsiderat upbraidings, pressing of Censures, or condemnation of what hath been done, the Churches peace is in hazard to be broken, and men like to be rent and divided in their communion. And oftentimes such things prove exceeding sashious, where men wilfully,

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or imprudently purfue fuch things without refred to the Churches peace. This often waited upon a time of darknesse, or persecution, when men, being in the dark, and in a diftemper, were led away by tentation. and overraken with many faults and sometimes amongst others, made to suffle with, and trample one upon another (as it were) not knowing what they were doing; and when this time was over, some were ready to carp at what was past in the dark, and to quarrel at others for fuch juffling, when they were fo through-other. This indeed was ordinary, but most unbecoming grave men, to mak that a ground of contending, which inadvertently was done by others in the dark (as the great Bollius faith) In nocturna tempore, denfis tenebris. Such contests are of four forts.

Contests about thefe, are of feveral forts.

First, Sometimes in general, there is a diffatif- Diffatisfafaction with the conflictation of the Church, in re- thion from spect of the groffenesse of the officers and Members conflictation thereof. This cannot be removed upon the one fide of Officers only, because tares cannot but be in the Church, and and Memthat discernably, as cyprian faith; it is removed then bers. by meeknesse and tendernesse upon the one side towards such as have withdrawn, and by their yeelding to return who have withdrawn, which when it came to passe, hath been matter of gladenesse to all the Church. Amongst cyprians Epifiles (Epift. 50. edit. Pameli) mention is made of urbanus, Maximus, and others of the Church of Rome, who being Confesfors and imprisoned in the time of perfecution, and after their delivery finding many groffe Members to be in the Church, and meeting with the doctrine of Novatus that commended separation to the godly for their more comfortable communion together, that: they came to be tickled therewith, and for a time to separate from the communion of Cornelius, and others of the Clergy, pretending there could be no communion in such an evil constituted Church; but afterward, finding the great hure that came thereby to the

Church, they overcame their own affections and in-

clinations

clinations, and out of respect to the good of the Church, did unite, which was exceedingly welcomed by all, as their Epiftle to Cyprian, and his to them. do manifest. And as their fall sheweth that it is not impossible, but that zealous Ministers, who have keeped our against desection, may be overtaken with fuch a fault; So it giveth a sweet copie of Christian deniednesse and tendernesse by others to be followed in the like case. Their words to Cyprian are worthy the observing. Nos habito confilio utilitatibus Ecclefie. & paci magis consulentes, omnibus rebus pratermifis & Judicio Dei fervatis, cum Cornelio Episcopo noltro, pariter & cum universo clero pacem feciffe, cum gaudio etiam universe Ecclesie, prona etiam omnium charitate.

clear.

A second fort of such contests, are, When faults The alleage are alleaged which either are not true, or cannot be ing of faults proven , althoughpossibly they may be both grosse not and true, for both of these did the Novatians and Dotrue, or not natifis trouble the Church, infifting long in charging many crimes upon men, particularly upon Cecilianus, and Ofins, which they could never be able to make out, although they alleaged that fuch faults were cloaked by the catholicks and that they were not to be communicated with. In this case the Orthodox took three wayes to remove such a difference. I. By pleading forbearance of awakening such contests. and exhorring rather to keep union, than to hazard to break it upon fuch grounds, and to (as Augustine faith)ut quedam incerta crimina pro certa pace Deo dimitterentur, Cont. Epift. Parm. lib. 1. cap. 2. 2. If that could not be aquiesced in, they admitted the thing to proof, over, and over again, that by lawfull triallie might be decided, as we will find in the former infrances, the same case of Cecilianus was often tryed, even after he was absolved. It is true the Donatists did not aquiesce, but did separare, (for which cause they were ever accounted most grosse Schismaticks) yet is it of it felf, a way wherein men may fatisfyingly aquiesce. A third way sometimes nfed, was, That when divisions were like to be occafioned

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fioned by diffarisfaction with a particular person against whom things could not be judicially made out lo as to found a Sentence, nor yet possibly was there so full farisfaction with him in every thing, as by owning of him to hazard a rent, where a people were flumbled by him, they did without judicial processing, or Censuring, interpose with the Bishop to cede, and wrot to the people to choose another. So in that Council of Carthage, Canon. 19. letters are Written to Maximianus (called Episcopus Bagiensis) and the people, that he might cede the Bishoprick. and they might choose another; yet there is no mention of any made-out acculation, or Sentence, but that for the good of the Church, Synodo placuit, &c. There is mention made elsewhere in history of a Bishop of that place, of that name, who had been a Donatift, and did return to the communion of the Church; but, if this be he, or what was the cause of this appointment, is neither certain, nor of great concernment in this.

A third fort of contests of this kind, are, When Pleadingfor crimes are groffe and clear, and men are either justly fuch as are censurable, or Censured; some (possibly honestly most justy minded) may be engaged to do for them, by their censured, or infimuating upon them, and giving mifinformations censurable. and prejudices, and so be brought to endeavour the preventing or removing of Sentences against, or from, fuch as justly deserve the same. In this case we find a threefold way of composure. 1. An endeavour The justness used to clear to others the justice of such a Sentence of the Senwhen it hath been traduced. Thus when Bafilides, tence to be and Martialis, were justly deposed by a Synod of Spain, cleared. they did, by false pretexts, engage the Clerey of Rome to own them, and write for their recovery which did exceedingly offend the Bishops of Spain; whereupon they wrot to Cyprian and thele in Africk for advice, who, being met in the Synod, approved their deposition, and advised them not to re-admit them, because non such who had any blemish and were not holy, ought to minister in the holy things, and that ra-

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ther shey should bear with Stephanus his mistake, who out of ignorance and milinformation was led to fide with fuch: Thus Cyprian hath it in his Epiffles to the Church of Spain, Epift. 68. So that fchilm was fropped and the Churches continued to acknowledge the lawfully ordained Bishops that succeeded these And the re-admission of such, had neither been in it felf lawful, nor yet had compassed the end of obraining peaceintheie Churches where the people was frumbled by their carriages. A fecond way was, When or the Sen- the men were orthodox and profitable, though failtence recal- ing in some groffe particular, yet when they were led, when owned by others in the Church, Synods did not frand, the person for concord, to remove such Sentences, as was formermight bepro- ly inflanced in the case of Osius: Augustine also in a certain Epifile, 164. doth approve the not-censuring of one Optatus, lest thereby a schism should be occasioned, because of manies adhering to him. We willfind also a third way, That when men have been Sentenced, and fome continued to owne them, and others to oppose them, such have been brought to submit themselves, and so the division bath been removed; It was so in that hot contest that continued long between the Bishops of Rome, and the Church of Africk, in the case of Apiratus Bishop of Sica, &c. who being deposed by the Synod of Cartbage, was pressed to be admitted by

Mutual upbraidings for failings

division was stopped. A fourth fort of contests or divisions for Matters of fact, is, When both fides have hade their failings in a time of darknesse and tentation, some one way, and some another, and after some breathing they fall, by mutual upbraidings to haxard the Churches peace; one casting up this fault to him, and he again upbraiding him with another. The way taken to

the Bishops of Rome, whom by no means these of

Africk would admit; at last, these that were Senteneed, came to acknowledge the Sentence; whereby the

Removed by prevent this, is most satisfying, when both, acknowa mutual ledging their own guilt to other, did forgive one another, and joyn cordially for the good of the work.

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to the debates with the Donati fis there is much mention made, not without great commendation of the practice of a Synod, which is called Concilium Cirtenfe. wherein the members did mutually confess their faults. and (faith he, to wit, Augustine, in the conference formerly cited Sibi invicem ignoscebant ne schisma fieret. And by the scope of the Catholichs in urging that example, and by the vehemency used by the Donatists in denying the same, it would seem, that they looked upon this as a most excellent and satisfying way of removing differences amonest godly men, when every one acknowledgeth their own fault and doth not upbraid but forgive one another, endeavouring to have the remembrance of bypast milearriages rather forgiven and buried in oblivion, than mentioned. Because good men being but men usually there are failings on both fides, and the denying of it, provoketh others to infift the more thereon, as the acknowledging thereof doth flop the upbraiding of them with the fame; and ufually it is to be feen, that the best men had rather mention their own faults in their acknowledgements, than hear the fame done by any other. Beza, Epift: 23. also hath such an advice as this to a Church that had fallen into division. Vinam utraque pars acquiescere malit quam fi euriofe nimium & perovernis quis fit majori calpa, inqui-

CHAP. XIII

What to do toward uniting in divisions arising from diversity of circumstances in external administrations, and especially arising from Church-Government,

A Third matter that occasioneth divisions, is a piversity of diversity in Worship, Ceremonies, or things circumstanthat relate to external administration of Ordices inexternances, when some follow one way in Preaching, natadministrating of Sacraments, Carechising, &c. and Brations. others another. This ordinarily breedeth janglings, and oftentimes troubled the Church, as we see in the businesse

businesse about Easter and Ceremonies. It is not our

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purpole to infift in this, because ordinarily such debates pretend some lawfulnesse, or unlawfulnesse in the thing contended for, and are to be counted amongst the jangling debates that the men of God are to eschew. And also because these things are often fully, and clearly discussed, We shall only say concerning them. 1. That as there is a necessity of fulfering some difference in Doctrine, So is there also necessity to bear with some differences in circumstances in the external manner of Worfhip, &c. and men would not foon offend at every difference, nor be displeased if it proceed not from affectation of fingularity, unfaithfulneffe, or some other corrupt rife. And we will find great condescendency in the greatdency there- est men, both of old and late, in things that are not finfull in themselves, for keeping of union in the Church: And thus far, the Apostles practice of becoming all things to all, will warrand. Zanchius In an Epiftle to this purpose, giveth both many examples of and reasons for this. 2. We say, that men especially in a time of divisions, would by all means endeavour to keep the trodden and approven way that hath been used, and is in use in a Church in such administrations: because the lesse men be sticking in the manner of these things, and the more simplicity they use, and the leffe they differ from what is most ordinary and approven, the leffe will the hazard of division be in these things, which doth arise from the multiplying of them; the changing of the old, or bringing in of a new manner, the condemning of the way and manner used by others, as having some great absurdity in it, and the pressing of their way, even in circumstances, upon others; These and such things are to be eschewed: and so indeed there is no way to peace in these things but to forbear; for it is more easie to forbear some new thing, than to make

others alter what is old, except there be some reason

Condescenin.

Better toforbear fome new thing, than to alter old, without Jomecon fiderablereafon. in the matter to move to this.

The great, and usually the most bitter contentions

of Church as was faid before, are in things that Divisions

clong to Government; which are of many kinds, and bout churchre their own proportionable cures when bleffed of government. Bod . We shall instance in these five kinds of contells in this matter. The first, is concerning the form of Government. The fecond, is concerning the formality of Church-judicatories. The third, concerning the matter enacted or decerned by them. The fourth concerning particular miscarriages and abules of power in Government. And the fifth, concerning the persons who ought to govern or to whom the Government is due, and whose determinations are

ultimatly to be obeyed.

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For the first. Debates about the nature and form of Government, may be confidered doctrinally, and foir is a difference of judgement; Some think one form of Government lawful, and others not that, but another. If this difference be fairly carried, it needeth make no division in the Church, as was in the foregoing part hinted. 2. It may be confidered practically, that is, when men not only think fo difberently in their judgement, but accordingly they act Prattical driving opposit designs, as if they were two parties, difference feeking to get one Church subdued to them, and nei- herein mather of them doth acknowledge the other. This can- beth divifinot be without division; for, the ground of all union on. and communion in the visible Church in all the Ordinances of Christ, is, the unity of the visible Church; as even in old time Augustine did presse: So Ecclefiaflick union, must be made up and entertained in a Church, by an unity in the Government thereof; for though there may be a forbearnce and a kind of peace where the unity of the visible Church is denied, or where there are divided Governments that are nor subaltern; yer there can be no Church-union,nor communion in Ordinances, of Word, Sacraments and Government, which refults from the former, and doth necessarily presuppose the same. We dare not, nor cannot offer any directions for making up

Concerning the form of Government

an union here, fave that men would unite in one form of Government that can extend to the whole hody, and that in such a Government as is allowed by Christ, otherwayes it can be no union; because for were not a duty, as union is.

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If it were asked; What kind of Government that

characters of Government fit jor uniting.

may be most probably, wherein men ought to unite? Anim. We mind notto digreffe to a doctrinal debate yet these characters may be given of it, It It me be a Government that can extend unto, and reach all the body; for, one main end of Government is uni on, Eph. 4. 2, 10, 11, &c. and the removing of of fences which make divisions, Matth. 18. And this union is not to be in this or that particular part of the body, but in the whole., I Cor. 12. that there be no schism in the body : therefore it must extend to all or be in a capacity to do for 2. It would be in a proportionable fitnesse to remove these causes that breed divisions, (for, there cannot be union in a Government that is not fitted for that) and therefore must be able to purge corrupt teachers, and the leaven of corrupt doctrine out of the whole Church, or any part thereof. Hence both in the Scripture, and prismitive times, and all alongs, there hath been fill a joynt authoritative concurrence for removing thefe causes of this evil in whatsoever place they did appear. 3. It must be such a Government as hath an unity amongst the whole Governours for this end, and fo it must answer to the unity of the body. Hence, in the Epiflit to the Galatians. Paul commend eth the remeeding of that evil to them all in a joynt manner, as being one lump, without respect to their Subdivision in particularChurches; and if this Authorit rity did not imply unity amongst the Governous wherever they lived, and a capacity to act unitedly upon occasion, there could by no accesse authoritatively to remove fuch evils from the Church, nor fuch weight in the mean applied. 4. It must be a Goverament wherein there is a co-ordinateness amongst the Governours; because so not only the union of the

Church Is made up, but her communion is reprered; and to place the Government in one, as Paiftedo in the Pope, doth not make an union in the overnment, which implies a musual and kindly phatever they pretend of union in it, it is really but prannie, and fuch as the most arbitrary suler may have when by violence, he seemeth to keep down all divions under him, neither fo can that body be faid to be united in him. And we fee in the primitive times, even after Bilhops and Patriarchs were brought in into the Church , that still the supream Government. whereby union was entertained, did refide in a mutual co-ordination, and combination, even of fuch Bilhops. Metrapolitans, Patriarchs, &a acting in an united and joynt way; whereby manifelly it appeareth. that fuch's Government as is to be united into . must be extensive unto the body, at least be in capacity to to be extended, and it must be in a co-ordination and confociation ofmany Church officers together; and that fuch subordinations as mar this co-ordination and equality, must be swallowed up, ere there can be an united Government for the prefervation of the union of the Church, because the supream Government and decision must be in many; and many of different degrees and places, cannot be fo one as these who are of the same order, to speak so.

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Tet we think, that where such an union cannot be had in Covernment, men that have liberty, without entanglement to their own consciences to follow their duty, ought to do it with all tender respect to the edification and union of the Church wherein they live, and to make the best of their particular case that may be for that end. But seing the wisdom and goodness of God hath made it our love in this Land, to live under a Government, to which the abovementioned characters do well agree; it is hopeful, if as we ought we conscionably adhere to the principles there-

of, we may, yea, shall unite in the Lord.

Secondly, Supposing, that men agree in that fame supream

fupresme government, to wit, Councils and Debates a- theremay be forme debate concerning the firmat bout thecon tution thereof, what is to be accounted a rie flitution of stitute Synod, and such as ought to be acknowled fo? It cannot be denied but that there is a ris Synods.

awrong in this, and that there are rules to be ke and that also de tacto they may be broken, even wh there is no failing in the matter. It is true also, that will fometimes find worthy men quarrelling flitution of Synods , and declining them , as was meely hinted, refusing to appear before them, rill to persons were removed from them, as chryfallam fourty two Bilhops with him, did in reference to particulary Synod at Chalcedon: and fometimes the Acts were declared void . because the meetin not numerous, as Ballamon doth infrance in the ca of one Johannes Amachantus, whose deposition declared null , because all the Bishops of cyprus w not conveened to his tryall, which might have be and because, in strict reckoning, there was one fe at his deposition than was allowed by the Car Yet concerning this we fay, 1. That it will be for very difficult to pirch on fuch defects in the conf tion of a Synod, as will make the fame null withou respect to the matter thereof, seing there may be ma detects that will not infer this. 2. It will be hard gather from Church-hiftery, or writings of the An prory rule to them to walk by in fuch a cafe. The

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ents; or Canons of Councils, what hath been a pers In ancient practices in this are fo various, that ir appeareth. matter hath ever been more headed by them than th formality of the conflication. And therefore, 3. We will find their practice to be according to this, When the matter was found and profitable, it was accepted thanforma- and the Synod was reverenced, although it hath had lity or num- leffe formality, and hath been of a fewer number; So the Council of Sardica, Landicea, and some particular Provincial Synods, have ever been of great authority because of their matter, when more numerous Synods, with moe formalities, have never been to accounted

d of nor reckoned amongst the General Counalthough their number hath been far greater than of these other. 4. When they come to determy thing after the close of corrupt Synods, they ually fift the conflictution thereof, but exane and condemn the matter thereof, and do repeal ir Sentences, and account them null from the be-ming; not because of questioning their Authority did it but because of their doing the same unfily as in the cales of Athanafius, Enflochius, Chryfollow , and lenatius , that followed him in the fame Sea : All whole depolitions were accounted null, because of the unjust violence that was used in them. We fay then, that hardly it will be observed, that sconfideration of a particular Synods conflitution , hath been the rife or ground of division amongst godly and orthodox men agreeing in the same Truth. Form of Government, and Rules for conffirming of Allemblies or Synods. But we willever find where eclinators or Protestations are mentioned , 1. That the party declined hath been palpably corrupt in funral doctrines. Or, 2. palpably driving on that general delign, and violence against particular perfore, as subserving the same. And , 3. it hath been alfo, after many evidences of such corruptions and violences, as in the former inflances that are given of Declinators is clear; where we find, that Synods have been acknowledged, and yet upon the discovery of their corrupt defigns and violence, have been declined and protested against as null, as that second Council at Ephelus was. Whereby it appeareth, that if their proceedings had been acceptable; their confirution and authority had not been called in queflioncharge loce much on our moules which

If it be asked upon supposition, That a difference concerning the conflictation of a particular Synod, and a division upon that account fall to be amongst godly and orthodox Divines; agreeing in the same Truths, form of Government, general Rules, for constituting of Synods, &c. What should be done for union in such acase?

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what hould Anfw. It would feen there should be no gree be done for to give directions here, the difference being union, when row; certainly many of the Ascients; and also of division a- Reformers, and eminent Divines, who have grown riseth about do groan under many sad pressures, corringdones theconstitute divisions in the Church, would have thought in tion of Sy- think it a great mercy to have had, and to have difference brought to such a point, and between parties; Yer, feing it is too too possible to be le upon, we do conceive it is no such thing as may to union, amongst parties so differing, impossible. lay therefore,

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I. That fuch would confider the little afefula Little ufe- and weightines, as to the main of edification the fulness as to is in the thing controverted whatever way it he ded thechurches ded : For, I. the declaring of fach a Synod valid , or edification null, as to its constitution, doth not corrupt any po in thething of Truth , hor bring in any new Form of Gove controvert- ment, nor after any Rule concerning the Form ag in; because the question is not in thesi, what form and rule according to which a Syned ough be conflicured? that is agreed upon: But the quel is , Whether fuch a particular Synod be agreeable fuch a Rule? and respect to the Rule makes the that they cannot approve it, and the other that cannot condemn it: And is it of great concerns to the main of the Churches edification to fay fo, or not, confidering it abflicatly, or suppose should never be determined at all? 2. We fay, it is not of fuch concernment, even to Govern to fay that fuch a particular Synod is right or w conflicuted : for though a Church cannot want vernment, and that cannot be caften; yet a Chu cannot lose much by questioning the constitution of a new one Synod, suppose rightly constituted abstracting up appear from the confideration of its matter contained there-in the in; and if its matter be warrantable, it hath weight with in it felf without fuch confideration of a confideration of a law-in fin it be not warrantable, such a confideration of a law-in fully confituted Synod cannot make it warrantables death

in, upon the other fide, The counting of a particolor Synod to be rightly conflituted, when it is not, mowledged. For r. It doth not alter the nature the marter; Nor, a. doth it alter the manner of conflicuting affemblies, because one particular failing in misapplying the Rule cannot incapacitate a Church for all time to come to keep the same, especially if it be guarded that no precedent be drawn from that pattern, to bind any new fenie upon the rule. 2. We Tay; that it would feem if any debate be such as decifion may be furboan therein, this may be accounted of that nature, to wit, Whether such a particular Synod be rightly confliruted, or not? because, if more corpopulou and inconvenience, that may be feared, follow, there are more material things to debate, and to differ upon; if more follow not, but that there may inbeaccesse to an united Government whereby these fulpicions may be put out of queftion, then it feemeth unlase to mar that, and the fruit which may follow by the disputing of what is past

But more nearly to take notice of such a difference This diffe-We may confider it two wayes. I. As it implieth a rence is eidifference in judgement. 2. As it inferreth a different practice. Firft, then, A sit inferreth the difference of judgement, there ought certainly to be a for bearmee, feing such things are often involved with maby difficulties and contradictions in matter of fact, Internation either party to affent to the other, especially Where hear and projudice hath someway fixed and Baopreoccupied the judgement, and certainly, forbearance here cannot be inconfiftent with the duty of Miwifters a though there were not luch a morive to perion of a fivade it. By forbearance we understand, 1. That none peremptorily preffeshe other either to acknowledge there are the validity or nullity of fuch a conflitutions 2. There weight a would be a forbearance of publick debating of it, union not or of any thing that may occasion the same, as prefa law hi fing of the acts thereof, if no other ground support

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ther in judgement, and may be forborn.

A THAT CONTINUE SCHNDAL

the same, but the Authority of such a Synod. And we conceive in the by, this occasion may be prevented by a mutual condesending, or joynt authoritative enacting, that such and such things, as possibly and be usefull afterward, be of sorce to all, if not by the former constitution, yet by the present appointment, and so both may agree in the matter. 3 A considerable in the superior of superior constitution, would be sorborn; and temp the question is so little and inconsiderable in it self, leavould not be odiously aggregated as insisted upon.

Or it retatestoprac tice, and so something is to betolerat and something done

would not be odiously aggreaged or infilted upon.

Secondly, Confidering it as it related to practice. fomething is to be forborn, and fomething is to be done. I. For forbearance, What might involve elther party in thematter of fact contrary to their judgment, would be abstained; and this forbearance in practice would be as broad as forbearance in judgment, that, as Cyprian faith, (in another case) differing brethren may both have their judgment and practice in such things at their own free arbitrements, as to foch reftraints. Neither can this forbearance mar the peace of any, because if such things be indifferent, and although lawfull, yet not necessary, the preferving of the Churches peace, and the preventing of what offence would follow, is ground enough to abffain from such things, out of respect to the consciences of others. If the thing be necessary, then indeed it is not to be forborn, neither is that pleaded-for here; yet the doing of it upon the account of such an authority, is not necessary; but the matter of the thing or some uncontroverted ground may be had for warranting the same. 2. That which is to be done, we conceive, is this, That there be endeavours to have some united, uncontroverted authority established, by whose authority things necessary may be done, without infringing the authority of what was paff in respect of those who acknowledge the same, and also without leaving the weight of the authority upon the former to those who question the same: And

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nceive this being done, neither is there any con firstened, nor any thing necessary for the Jurches good omitted, yea, by this means there is is unitedly to feek the Churches edification withmany prejudice by the former contention; because by laying this new foundation posteriour to the former the Church is put beyond that flumbling ock, and carried over, or by the same; And therefore there is no reason to tear falling upon such a difficulty, but rather with the greater speed to make progresse when men may win by it and leave it behind them. This was the way that the Ancients rook in the primitive times, even when Synods in this respect might have been faid to have been corruped, when God gave opportunity they fet themselves to rectifie the matter, and to do upon it what was fit for the good of the Church, without mentioning the nullity of the form thereof, or infifting thereupon. And indeed, the doing otherwayes feems to lay too much weight upon the authority or confitution of a Church-judicatory, as if when the fame is every way regular, it could adde fomething, or ought to have ght, where the matter is not in it self approvable; high hath been eschewed by Orthodox Divines both of old and late, who ever therefore looked most unto the matter determined or decided

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If it be asked, What usually was done in such whatufualcases where the Authority seemed to be declined ? ly hath been From what is faid, the Answer may be gathered, to done mben That both fides fatisfied themselves with the Authority rectifying of the ceatter wherein there was any grie- was 'declivance. And therefore, I. it will hardly be found, ned. when such a Declinatour was expressed in one Synod that any mention is made thereof in the next enfuing Synod that did reclifie the matter, but instantly they fall upon that. 2. We will find, that where no exprefic Declinatour was, yet did not that any way firengthen such an Authority, nor mar the condemning thereof more then in other Synods where it was, and therefore neither is so much weight to be laid up-

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on it, whether it have not; for, its flighting do has weaken Authority where it is, and its acquiring not being at all; doth not adde Authority where and, because Authority must stand and full account. ing to its own intrinsick grounds and wastens. we conceive that it is not fuitable to the Authority of Christ's Ordinances, and the nature of His Courts that either the removing or flanding of fuch a legal formality, should be rigidly prefled, and it makes proceedings in Christ's Course to be involved in too many subtileies that are used in humane Laws. And alfo supposing, that a corrupt constitution may be without fuch a formal Protestation, it feems to give too much advantage thereto as if there were leffe accesse afterward to condemn the same; And upon the other fide, supposing that a lawfully constituted Synod should be declined, as the Synod of Dort was lately by the Arminian Remonstrants, the preffing too vehemently of the removing thereof, doth suppose fome way the confliction to be leffe valid if such a thing should stand. This is only to be understood in the case presupposed, to wit, Where the question is not about the authority of Synods simply, but of this fference be- or that conflicution of a particular Synod : the first tween the indeed, that is, the questioning of Synodical Authodeclining rity, hath been thought intolerable in all times, beof Synodi- cause it strake at the root of Church-government and call Autho- Order, without which the Church cannot fublift; rity fimply. But the fecond, which acknowledgeth the fame Goand the con vernment in general, and Rules of Constitution, and flitution of professeth respect to that fame Authority, is indeed a particu- not so intolerable, because it doth suppone fill the

> tive times they did utterly condemn appellations from Synods simply, that is, the betaking them to ano-

> ther Judge, as more proper than, or superiour unto

fuch Synods; and there are feverall Canons in the Councils of Africk that threaten Excommunication

Church to have power, and the exercise thereof to Lar Synod. be necessary. Hence we will find, that in the primipro

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can't foreign power as a faperiour Judges Yet we all and, that the Councils do allow Appeals from the commerce of greater, or from particular Countists a general Yeafrom their own particular Synods as more general hearing of others in the Provinces eather allow even adjacent Provinces to be appealed as in one corruptions should be in one particular province; This was enacted in the Council of Sardica and Bishops are requested by severall Canons not to bink this decognory from their authority, because this did confist well with respect to Church-authority and Government in it self, but tended only to prevent or remedy exorbitances and abuse therein which of it self, if it be not abused, is not allow him.

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what is to be done in order to union about divisions con-

He Question may be concerning the matter I enacted by some Synod even when there is no exception against the constitution thereof, that is, when the matter approven by it, is unfound, or when a truth is condemned, at least it is judged to be fo. We are not here speaking of such matter as is sundamentall, but such as is consistent with soundness of judgement in the main, and piety in these who may be upon either fide. Such as were these debates concerning the rebaptizing of Hereticks, and Schismaticks; or for the admitting them unto the Church by confirmation only, and questions of that nature, which may fall to be amongst orthodox men. I suppose it were good, that judicial decifions of such things, were not multiplied; yet upon supposition that they are past, some what would be faid. Such determinations are of two forts.

First, Some are meerly doctrinal and of this kind are such questions as are concerning the object of Predestination, order of Gods Decrees, and such

Doctrinall, not fundamental, or nigh the foundation.

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ike and others it may be, which are of lefter comment than these. These being meerly do and inferring no divertity in practice, or Wor there is the eaer acceffe to union not withfrandin such, respect being had to the matual forbearan mentioned, fo that none be confirmed to school ledge what is enacted by vertue of fuch a decision, he caule such a determination in matter of Doctrine is but ministerial, and declarative: And therefore a one man may forbear another to speak his own min from truth allo, and not inftantly divide, from him or much contend with him; So ought he to bear with a Synod and not to divide from them upon that account, he having accesse to declare his own mind: and the reasons thereof, and otherwayes to carry himself, as may keep him free of that apprehended guiltinesse; and so a Synod ought to bear with some particular men that differ. But by adding the fecond kind, there will be ground to speak more.

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somedoctri nal decisional onsinfer division, others but diversiy.

The fecond kind is of fuch determinations as have not only a doctrinall decision, but also some practicall confequents following thereupon: which we may again deftinguish these waves. I. They are elther such consequents and practices as infer a division and opposition, or a diversity only; some consequents infer a division or separation, As suppose a Church-Synod fhould enact, that no perfons should keep communion with fuch as they judge not to be godly, nor toyn in Ordinances, nor to much as fit down with them; Or that no persons, thinking otherwayes, might lawfully be ordained Ministers, or admitted to that office, as fometimes appeareth, hath been determined in very numerous Synods of the Donatiffs. Indeed the standing of such Sentences in sorce, and Having execution accordingly following them, are fuch, as there can be no union had upon fuch tearms. Again, some practices imply no division in Worthip, or Government, but only fomething which possibly as in it self unwarrantable, as that Act of rebaptizing was, which was determined and enacted by feverall Councils councils in Africk: which kind of determination if he confidered either as peremptory, and exclusive, that is allowing none to do otherwayes; on the admitted to Ministery and Ordinances which hould not engage to do to; Or moderated, form though it held forth such a determination concerning the fact, yet doth not peremptorily presse others beyond their own light. Of the first forewere the peremptory Acts of the West church concerning Ensterning dayes and other ceremonies; Of the last, were these Acts of the Council of Africk concerning the rebaptizing of Schismaticks wherein none were pre-

fed beyond their own judgement.

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Again, such confequents and practices that follow. Church determinations, may either be prefently necellary to be practifed and dayly practicall, as suppole a Church should make constitutions for adminifirstion of Baptilm and the Lords Supper, by mixing in with the effectials thereof, such and such corrupt ceremonies and additions; Or, they may be fuch practices as are only inpposable and possible; but it may be exceeding improbable-like at least for the future, that there shall be occasion to put them in actuall exercise; though, it may be, there was some present exigent giving occasion to such a determination tion, which possibly may never recur; As supposes a Church should determine, that a converted femoles Turk, should not be baptized in the manner that others are baptized, but some other way; it may be there was some Jew or Turk to be baptized when that determination passed; but that particular Act being by there is no probability that ever there may be accesse to put the same in practice again, although it be not simply impossible. Now there is great odds betwine these two; and in effect this last case, doth look likes a doctrinall determination when the occasion thereof is pall, than any way to be practicall.

Further, we may distinguish these also in such practices, that are positively enacted to be practised, by an authoritative Actordaining in such possible cases, that it be so done, that is, when such a case occurrent,

Some determinations areofthings daylyprafficable, others only for an exigence, fcarcelyever again occur ring.

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men faculable offricted to follow the fame, miften frould accordingly at : Or they enfer, as do not ordeln any practice to be dod do declare fucha thing to be lawfull; As fi they fhould declare, a Minister might lawfully tize a few forms is formerly faid, without a fory ordaining of the same, which is fill, ret doctrinal decision than a positive ordinar

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Somedeter- We may yet add one diffinction more minations this, determination is either to declare fucha are for Mi- lawful to Church men in force Ecclefialtick of nifters pra- as suppose (as was sometimes in the primitive Elite, others fecutions) upon some Querie from some Ministers are answers should be enacted, that in such and such cases M to the que- flers might flie, fell the Church-goods, or ule thions of Ru and fuch thifts and means for their escape and della ance, as others, it may be, would think unhwhill tris, when the practifing of the supposed case bell to Magtifraces, or men in civil flations; as fun upon fome Queries from Magistrates or others. quiring if it were lawfull to admit Jews to dwe fuch and fuch places meerly for civil trafficks of they might cut and drink with an Amballador of Cham of Tartaria , or help Chinas against the Tarti or fuch cases, which possibly, beside the occasion the Querie, might never occur; now supposing the reale to be decided affirmatively by a Church-judic commue after the case is not probably practically be caule of the former decition, and to in the reft of the former supposseions, it is to be enquired . If? and Now union may be win at in them respectively?

Now these distinctions being premitted, we come to confider accordingly, How union may be man up) where division standerh upon such accounts?

In reference to all which, in the general, we lay, That peremptorings and felf-willedness being excladed (which are exprelly prohibited to be in a Mimifter in it is not impossible to attain union amongst mithinit, fatier, and orthodox men, who will acof thiowicine that mutuall condescending and forbear-Met

fleen will appear: wherein we may relate to her generall grounds laid down; and be the fointiances and realous, because this draweth right beyond our purpose; and also, because read in this, need not by us either so be infirmed on their duty, many of whom the new convince, waste of their duty, many of whom the new convinces whether we find only, as in all the reft, and their duty which may occasion. remembering of what they know, and the awaken-of the Zeit and affection that they have, to act

me then to the first fore of determinations, More dech are doctrinall; it may appear from what is Grinal dethat there can be no just ground of division upon cisions in particular persons: and again, particular per- yountsought may forbear a Church. It is not to be thought, to make no all orthodox Divinesare of the fame mind in all division. he synod hath nor made my divisionly Centuring of ich, neither these who differ from that determi-ntion have broken off community ut have keeped communion, and union in the Church th not been thereby interrupted; yet these who ap prehend thendelves to be right, cannot but think the other is in an errour: and if this forbearance be not red, there can never be union in the Church, exallowed, there can hever be unton in the Church, exceps we should think that they behaved all to be in
the time mind about such things, and than there should
never be a decision to a Church, but when there is abfollow harmony, for, supposing the plurality to decide
right, yet these, whose judgement were condemned,
were obliged according to their light to divide, seing
they are in their own judgments right. It is true, I suppose that it is not simply unlawful, or hurtful to truth Church judicatory out of respect to peace in the surch, so condescend abstractly to wave a ministeciall.

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rial decision without wronging of the matter Suppose these in Africk, for peace had waved th diciall decision of the necessity of repaptizing in case; or these who determined the contrary, in have waved theirs, yer neither of them had hurt own opinion. Or suppose, that in the decisions of were concerning Bafter, upon both fides of the cont verfic, either had past from their decisions and lest matter, in practice, to mens arbitrement without decision. I suppose this had not been a wrong to tr (supposing it to have been on either side) And ind confidering what is written in the Hiftory, fome the like this may be gathered. For, first, less clear, that there were determinations on both fides, and particu larly, That the west Church, and these that joyned with them, did determine the Lords Day necessarily to be keeped for diftinguishing them from the fews, at It allo clear, That Policrates, with many Biffiops in all did judicially condemn that deed, appointing the fourteenth day of the month to be keeped, So that n ceffarily both decisions could not fland. And, a th is clear alfo. That the way that wastaken to lettle the difference so stated, was, That judiciall decision fhould be waved, and men left to their own arbitres ment to observe what day they thought good, whether in the East or West Church, whereupon followed an union; and Policarpus did communicate with Anestus at Rome upon thefe tearms, ut neuter eorum fententiam Suam urgeret aut defenderet (as the Centuriators have te out of Ireneus) that is, that neither of them should urge or defend their own opinion:and upon this there followed peace notwithstanding of that difference. It brake up again more ftrongly in the time of Victor, and although Ireneus was of his judgment, yet did he vehemently preffe him not to trouble the Church by purlying such a determination, and did exceeding weightily expoltulat with him for it; He wrote also to the other party, that both of them might forbear the preffing of such decisions, and that the thing might be left to mens arbitrement, without prejudice to the Churches union, as formerly it had been used : this is clear

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A Treatiff contrining SCANDAL.

from Church-hiftory, and that word of Sozomengerap, 19. is weighty, Privolum enim, & quidem grato, judicarunt, consuetudinis gratia, à je mutue ferreans qui in pracipuis religionis capitibus confentithat is, They judged it, and upon good ground. if frivolous for men to be separated or divided one nom another, because of a custome, who did agree meether in the main points of Religion. And though as matter be of it self no controversie decided in the Word, (at least as it was stated) yet considering their oughts of it, and the grounds which they alleage for drives not foto them: and that peremptorines of Villers, who afterward would not be reclaimed from that second determination, is condemned by all, as being the ground of that following schlim. And indeed in fuch cases where two parts of a Church are divided, having independent authorities as to one another, dethere being contrary determinations in the fame collonic feemeth convenient and necessary for peace ceither both should wave their decisions, or that both fhould permit the decifions of each other toftand and be in force, to luch only as should acquiesce therein and willingly acknowledge the fame.

Again, where there is nothing like a party or equality, but the division is in the same one Church betwixt a greater and fmaller number, and the greater will not be induced to remove their determination; It is no way finfall to the leffer to joyn with them notwich flanding thereof, they having their own freedom and liberty cautioned, as was formerly fald; Yea, this feemeth not unexpedient that they should do for the good of the Church. r. Because it is not so readily to be expected that men who have fuch an advantage will cede to these who have it not. 2. It may have inconveniencies, if a fmaller diffenting number floodd necessitat a Church to wave former determined truths though possibly not fundamental, because of their diff fatisfaction therewith, who efteem them not to be truths, and firengthen others in a schiffing as if they could not keep union and communion with a Church where any thing contrary their mind were determine of Churches union, as formerly it had been uted a court for

How the smaller number should yeeld to the greater.

Allo, 3, it feemeth most agreeable to realism a in finless cedings, the leffer number should cede to greater. And, 4. because by so doing, this accide confirmation of an opinion, by having the pluridie Church or Synod for it, is left open to the other fi when they may be the plurality. Hence we fee o sally, that the minor part cedeth to the greater (if not preffing of the removal of fuch a decision be a co ing) yea, even when the plurality were wrong, that case of Africk, these who differed, did not pre the rescinding of that determination, having their o liberry: Nor did thefe that had the plurality then them, impose any bond to keep the other from r feinding their determinations, if they thould come to be in such a capacity, but both keeped peace for the time; and afterwards, in the dayes of Augustine, we will find Councels of the Church of Africk determini the just contrary concerning that case of Baptize and yet still entertaining peace, and communion mongst themselves, although the authoritative decision flood alwayes upon the fide of the plurality.

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CHAP. XV.

What fal' be done in order to union about fuch decifions as have practical confequents following thereon.

O come to the fecond case, to wit, anent fuch de L cifions as have fome practicall confequents follow ing thereupon; For the more fhort answering, we fit

lay down these Affertions.

Contrary practices REAR.

Affert. I. In fuch practices as are opposit, and infer division in the cases mentioned, there can be no union buildawall or communion expected, as we fee in all the cales of fip ara- where fuch have been practifed, as of the Novations, Donatifts, and such like: there may be more or less hate and bitternesse betwirt men that differ so . but there cannot be union, because, such determinations and practices do draw a line, and build a wall of feparation betwint the one and the other, and fo makes one fide to be accounted as not of the fame body. ditti

Affert. 2. Where the confequents only infer forme Diversity Herence, or are not peremptorily prefled, they do there may of infer necessarily a division, as we see in these cases be without Africk, and others mentioned; and Sozomen in the division.

mapter cited, giveth many inflances of divertities of his kind in Churches, without any breach of comminion, and faith it is necessary, because, Neque easdem traditiones per omnid similes, in omnibus Ecclesis. quanvis in omnibus confentiant, reperire possis, that is, Te wil bardly find the same traditions alike in all things in the churches, even though they agree in all things that material. And, upon them atter, such determinanons are but indeed as if they were doctrinal to fuch as acknowledge them not, and men are accordingly to

walk in them.

Allert a. In fuch practices as are daily practicable, Great folly inrespect of the occasions thereof, union is more dif- to make, or ficult f though not impossible I than in such cases, keep diwhere the occasion of practice is not probable, be- vision for cause there being no present occasion to practise the what is fame, it looketh most unwise like, to bring in, or keep rarely or in a more certain and greater evil in the Church, for never eschewing of what folks may never be put to; and practicable suppose the case to be past, that may probably never recurre, it is more for the Churches good by abflaining the approbation of fuch an act, and by not being involved in the apprehended guilt thereof to make up again the communion of the Church, for the preventing of a greater burt, because that continueth to be a duty, and is necessary to edification; and the thing being past ... ought not to be the occasion of a present and following division, as was formerly faid:

If it be faid, How can there be union in such a case upon the principle supposed, till (as may be said by one fide) those who have decided and afted corruptly, should repent, and (as may be faid by the other) till those who have divided unjustly from the Church, and wronged the authority thereof, should acknowledge their offence, without which there cannot be union? For answer to which we say, 1. What if neither party shall ever be brought to repent or ac-

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union is not impo fible noting diverment.

knowledge an offence? fhall the Church in fuch a case never attain to union? Repentance implyeth a conviction, and this imply eth information and clearness in the judgment that such a thing is wrong. Now. it being often feen that it is impossible to get men of one judgment concerning such a thing, Must therewithstand- fore union be impossible till men be of one judgment? This bath been formerly disproved. 2. What if this fity of judg- had been the mind of the Churches and Servants of God from the beginning of the world? there had never been publick-ecclefiastick, nor privat-christian peace; for they were never all of one judgment; and to affert or write what is supposed to be an errour, is proportionably a fin and an offence, as to determine it judicially; and it would infer the necessity of repentance, even in such cases, for the attaining of peace and making up of differences; And shall we thus as once condemn the generation of Gods People, who have, without proposing, or, at least, pressing of such a thing, entertained peace and union amongst themselves? 3. This would enervate all the former grounds that plead for union with forbearance, and fuch like, which, I suppose, will not be warrantably done. 4. This way is indeed either to make union the more impossible, or if union be attained in any measure, both the leffe hearty amongst themselves, and the leffe profitable unto others, as hath been formely cleared. 5. We are not to respect in this, mens particular carriage or defert (which possibly would not be thought of great concernment by others, not engaged in that debate) but the Churches good is to be looked to, and what it doth require, as we may gather from what hath been formerly faid. And if Church-centures (fuch as the enjoyning of publick repentance, or acknowledgment of an offence, are) be to be abflained from, even in reference to open corrupt teachers fometimes for respect to the union of the Church, and for the preventing the flumbling of those that are weak, and prone to divide or milcarry (if fuch should be censured) as we see in Paul's abstaining to censure the falle teachers, Gal. 5. and 2 Cor. 10. (spoken to in the

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the former part) much more are Cenfures of any fort to be abstained from upon that ground, in the case propoled, as it is confidered in its matter and persons differing. Hence we may find what condescendence hath been formerly used in such cases, when union hath been closed, or proposed to be closed, (in matters possibly of greater moment than are supposed (Sine detrimento bonoris, aut charitatis, that is, without prejudice to reputation, or charity. 6. We therefore fay in opposition to that objection, That union is to be fludied, by endeavouring to joyn in what is for the good of the Church, and by burying the refentment of each others wrongs, rather than (as Beza faith in that forecited Epistle to Grindal concerning division) There (bould be too curious, and, as it were, contentionaffecting enquiry made, who is most in the wrong, and thereby a bringing the matter to that paffe, that the whole body cannot be faved, but by cutting off of some members. 7. We adde, If repentance be necessary, will any think that division is the way or mean to attain the same, which doth imbitter and confirm men in their opinion & opposition respectively, as formerly hath been said?

It will be now no great difficulty to answer in the taft two cafes, to wit, When the decision is a simple declaration of the lawfulneffe of a thing, without any positive appointment that such a thing should be put in practice, For, if upon the former grounds union may be attained, and division removed in the former cases, it may be much more in this; most of all, where the matter determined, concerneth such practices as actually are to be performed but in some extraordinary case by Civil Powers. Because in such cases men may more easily condescend to forbearance, than in matters of greater necessity and concernment; and there can be but little prejudice alleaged to follow unto the Church (to be put in the ballance with the Churches peace) either by condescending that such a determination should be waved, or stand with the qualifications foresaid; It's true that tenaciousnesse in the least particular, and peremptory refusing to condescend therein, will breed a rent and schism, and

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make union as impossible, as if it were the greatest matter that were the ground of diftance; yet it would feem, that in the case presupposed, (especially these last three being put together) that judicious, lober, and godly men should be very easily induced to condescend to each other, with the qualifications foresaid.

for the Churches peace.

For, 1. The matter, although it hath a right and wrong in it, yet it is among the least of the truths that. may be accounted to relate to the foundation. 2. It's in a matter most improbably practicable, and which may possibly never occur. 3. It's a determination, or an exercise of Church-power that hath least influence upon Church-matters, seing it positively ordaineth nothing. 4. It's in a thing most extrinsick, which might have been put in practice, and usually is put in practice without the Churches intermedling therein. either pro or contra. It feemeth therefore unsuitable that fuch a determination in reference to such practices, should be greatly contended-for, when neither the standing of such a decision can procure, nor the removing thereof mar, the practices concerning which the decision is. 5. Supposing the qualifications forefaid, the flanding of such a decision doth not strengthen the affirmative opinion, because it doth not infer any bond or obligation upon others who do not of their own accord acquielce in the fame; nor doth it give ground for alleaging such a decision to any but to fuch as of themselves are swayed with the matter thereof: And therefore feing it hath no force to bind moe than would be bound with the matter if it were not; nor can infer that it is the judicial decision and judgment of such a Church, more than this, to wit, That it is the judgment of the plurality for the time, yet so as it is not acknowledged by others, and who are not to be confirmined to any alteration in their judgment, or in their practice, by that determination, more than if it had never been (which is a necessary qualification of the forbearance mentioned) and suppoling the faid decision to be waved, these particulars would be true. Again, upon the other fide, The removing

removing of that decision doth not strengthen the negative (for that cannot be intended by such a compofure that either fide should be strengthened) nor doth the flanding thereof weaken the same; because, according to the qualifications forefaid, not only there can be no Cenfure following upon it, but even as to the Determination it felf, though it be not formally removed, to be no decision simply, it is no decision to them, nor can be alleaged to them against their opinion, more than if it were not: And thus it becometh of equal extent with those who approve the matter, and fo it doth bind only fuch as account themselves bound; and if men account themselves bound, the removing of such a decision, will not loose them; and if they account not themselves bound otherwayes, the standing thereof in such a case, will not bind them; and therefore, upon the matter, we suppose, it is hardly imaginable that there can be a leffer ground of divifion, the qualifications necessary for union in the cases of greater concernment being granted in this) fure we are there was never division continued upon a lesser account, to whatsoever side we look; for, in effect. it is for the time to come as if that decision had never been, as to its efficacie and weight in producing any effect. And we are fure that the great Divines that have so eagerly pursued, and so much coveted union, would have thought themselves happy if they might have had it by condescending and yeelding either to the one fide or the other. And though the moderate divine Bucer, was thought to thirst after peace in the Church so vehemently, that some zealous men said, that out of love thereto he was like almost has rize feces, that is, to drink down the dregs with it; yet I am confident, that had the state of the controversie come fo near, and in such matter, and amongst such men, as is formerly presupposed, he would not have been so charged by the most rigid, although for the peace of the Church he had drunken over all the dreggs that might be in both the cups, the mentioned qualifications being observed; For, I suppose, that the removing or standing of such a decision in the former re-Cc3 **spects**

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fpeds, will neither be found inconfistent with any Confession of Faith, even the most full that ever was in any Orthodox Church; por with the Fundamentals of Religion that are laid down in any Catechilms or Writings of any found Divines; nor with the Con-Litutons and Acts that have been thought pecessary to be inrolled amongst the Acts of any Council or Synod; nor, for ought we know, will be found to have been the matter of debate, even in the most contentious times amongst Orthodox Divines. It would feem then, that if there be a latitude allowed without hazard for one to condescend to another for the good of the Church in any thing, it must be in the case preluppoled.

CHAP. XVI.

The remedies of divisions, arising from misapplication of power in ordination of Ministers, and admitting to, or debarring from, communion.

The fourth matter of controversie in reference L to Government, is usually some misapplication

of that power, or what is apprehended to be fo in

some particular acts. As, 1. Ordaining such as were not thought to be worthy. 2. Depofing others (as was thought) unjuftly. 2. Admitting unto, or debarring, from communion without ground respectively, and such like cases. Upon the first ground The Ordi- arose the great schism of the Donatists, because of the nation of a Ordination of eacilianus, esteemed by them to be a person wor- Traditor. Of such fortalso were the schisms frequently at Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria, and other places, thy of the because some were ordained to the dislatisfaction Ministery. ordained by of others. And somerimes the distarisfaction was well thurch Offi- grounded; because the persons ordained, were not urs, is not worthy: sometimes it was greundlesse; But often it tended to double Ordination, and Separation in the o be 46close. These things had need to be prevented, so as ut for some there be no just ground of dissaction given by the Ordination of an unworthy min in such a time, nor any.

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any opposit Ordination to fix a schism; because these things are more difficultly removed as bath been faid: Yet supposing them to be, these generals may be propoled for healing of the fame. 1. We will not find an Ordination eafily counted to be null, even though done in a schism, as all the instances do clear; yea, the Orthodox flood not to account the Bishops and Presbyters ordained amongst the Donatists, to be such. because they had the essentials of Ordination, and were ordained by Church-officers. 2. We suppose it needful for peace, that there be no rigid sticking to have some particular Ordinations rectified, to the prejudice of the Church in general, especially, where the unfirmeffe or unworthiness of the person is not easily demonstrable. 2. It seemeth right and just, that no Ordination of fuch a kind should establish one that is unworthy in the Ministery; for, that is not to be dispensed with; although it be not a valid ground to keep up a division, where the removal of such a perfon cannot be attained: and the most unquestionable Ordination for the form, cannot make one a worthy Minister, who otherwayes is not a worthy person. In the conferences with the Donatifts, the Catholicks offered to quarrel the Ordination of none amongst them that otherwayes was worthy, nor to maintain any amongst themselves who were not worthy. 4. Yet union union would not be suspended till this be done, but would not it is to be made up, that it may be done, as in the in- be suspended france formerly given. Because, 1. this trial is the on fach work of an united Kirk, and will require joynt tryals. ftrength and concurrence for the fame. 2. Because union is a present duty, although there were desect in fuch a trial, and a defect in that, will not warrant a division. 2. It is not only a duty commanded, but it is a mids necessary for promoving the trial and cenfuring of unworthy Ministers, for times of division are, ever times of liberty, and thereby Authority is weakened, men are discouraged to follow it, and are otherwayes diverted, &c. 4. Because division can never be looked upon as the mean to effectuate that tryal, but it strengthens the person who is to be tryed, and leffeneth

lessenth the humber of zealous pursuers of such a design, and incapacitates men for this duty, who otherwayes might be instrumental therein. 5. Beside, if the guilt be not so very palpable, as it may be demonfirated to be in persons, at such a time, it is safer to preserve certain peace in the Church, than to hunt for an uncertain crime, as hath been often said.

Fifthly, Where a persons being in a place, is the ground of contention, and things look not fatisfyinglike in his way, even though groineffe be not demonstrable, we think it not unbecoming the authority of Church-judicatories, which is given for edification. to appoint the removal of fuch a person from such a place, (as was formerly hinted) for, it looketh lad like, that a Minister's being in such a particular place, should be more obstructive to edification and to the Churches peace, than if he were not a Minister at all. And it becometh well that finglenesse that a Minister ought to have in seeking the edification of the Church, to yeeld to such an advice and appointment, or, of himself willingly to overture the same, For, Ministers are not to plead interest in a Congregation simply, as a man doth his particular right; because every thing of this kind ought to be done with respect to the edification of the body, the promoting whereof ought to regulate both entries and removals. It's true, there would be warinesse here, lest dangerous precedents be given; yet confidering, that a Minister who may fomewhat peremptorily plead interest, and that jure in the Ministery, that yet cannot with that fame ffrength of reason plead it in such and such a particular Congregation; and confidering, that it is a publick good that is respected, and not the satisfaction or diffatisfaction of some in a particular Congregation, we conceive the former affertion cannot be fimply denied.

Where contrair Ordinations are, it is more difficult; Yet it would be confidered that all these things we speak of now, are but particular: and therefore although sull satisfaction should not be obtained in them, yet ought they not to be stumbled upon to the prejudice the faid diffi have time good ly m

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the Church is more eminently concerned as hath been faid; Yet where peace is intended, we suppose this difficulty may be win over, one of these wayes, which have been formerly in use in such cases. As, r. Sometimes one person did willingly cede to another for the good of the Church; So did Basilius in a case formerly mentioned, for which his condescendency he is ever highly commended. Neither can this be thought to be a cafting by of the care of such a people, but rather the contrary, it is more their good that they should be united under one orthodox Mimster, though the more weak man, than to continue a division with two that are more able. 2. Sometimes where two were, it was thought good to unite them in their meetings, and that the longest liver should alone be acknowledged, if no other occasion offered, and neither were unworthy of the place, as in a case at Antioch formerly mentioned. 3. Sometimes both have been laid afide, where neither have been worthy, or factions have been firong for either party, and so rooted prejudice of the adherers to the one fide against the other. This overture is offered by Augustine to the Donatists, for composing that difference of opposit Ordinations, which was frequent amongst them, each city almost having two Bilhops; And this way hath been followed in compofing many schisms, even of late. 4. Sometimes the party offended and wronged by an opposit Ordination, hath keeped division down in some respect, by ceding, or withdrawing, or hiding their offence, til fome probable or regular way hath occurred; rather choosing never to possesse such a place than to do it by wronging of the Church, in keeping up an irregular schism, when there was no accesse orderly to redresse it. Thus Eusebius being offended that Lucifer had ordained Paulinus a Bishop in Antioch to a party disclaiming him, who were called Eustachians, he moderated his carriage and withdrew, waiting to have had a lawful decision, and resolving to be submissive to that. Where men mind the good of the work, it is not like but some such way will compose these things; and if these fail, we will

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find also adjacent Bishops travelling to compose the same; Yea, sometimes men of authority coming from very far; And also some by civil Authority appointed to treat therein, as in the closing of that schism at Antioch; for, schilms, arising from such discontents, are not ordinarily by meer Authority removed, because there is often something both of affection and conscience in the businesse: there is need therefore of mutual friendly conserving for giving and receiving of satisfaction therein.

CHAP. XVII.

Remedies of divisions arising from the misapplication of power, in censuring, or sparing Ministers, real or supposed.

A Nother part of the exercise of this power (which often in its misapplication, or its being pretended to be so is the ground of Church divisions) is The matter of censuring and deposing of Ministers, and that

two wayes.

The one is, When some good men are deposed, or such as are supposed to be so, whereby persons that apprehend the injustice of the fact, do disclaim such a power, and adhere to such a person notwithstanding. Thus did the schism at constantinople arise for the unjust deposition of chrylostom, and his adherents were called Joannite, as if they had been of another Religion; Such also was that of the Eustachians at Antioch; which being driven against honest men, and there being no condescending, at least what was once condescended unto, being again recalled, there was no stopping of such divisions, till in the manner, formerly hinted, and that being after both their deaths. In such cases extremities are to be shunned, for, it's extremity that maketh rents, that is, too little condescending on the one side and too much tenaciousness on the other.

One extremity to be eschewed, is, When Churchjudicatories are too tenacious of a past Sentence, or the formality of some legal advantage which seemeth

In what cases extremities are to be shunned. art 4

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to justifie the Sentence, as in that case of chrysoftoms. almost all the weight was laid on this at first. That he refused to appear before them, or acknowledge their Authority as they were confliruted : and although both the people and others did adhere to him, yet there was no condescending, which occasioned a great schilm, and was exceedingly condemned by the generality of faithful men in these daves. Another extremity is, upon the other fide, When for fatisfaction of a fudicatory too little is ceded; or upon supposition, even of an unjust Sentence, a schism is stated, to the hurt of the Church. In this case we may observe Judicato. these things, 1. That sometimes the Judicatory hath ries wifely condescended to re-admit a person, otherwayes of remitting efteem, although possibly some particular slip hath rigour. been, that in strict justice might have deserved the Septence : this was in the case of Osius formerly cited. It is true, there is no mention of the cause wherefore the Synod of Spain did depose him, nor is it clear whether it be that famous Ofius, whom the Arians deposed and whipped ill he approved Athanasius his deposition; yet this is clear, that he being a man effected of In the Church, though possibly out of infirmity having fallen in that fault, he was for concord reftored, Sine detrimento honoris, without prejudice to his credit. 2. Where men have been deposed upon the breach of fome legality, or contempt, if otherwayes they have been men of gifts, and approven integrity in the main, though possibly thought proud and rigid by others, as in that case of chrysoftom; they were again received into the Church, and the Sentences with confent laid by, as appeareth in the re-admitting of Chryfostom after his first deposition (of the justice of whose Sentence of deposition, because there was no convincing evidence to fatisfie the people. Severinus in preaching did fay, That his pride was reason sufficient) which for a time removed the division, and brought a chearful calmnesse, till shortly after his old enemies interrupted it, and did enter a new processe with him, because he had re-entered his Bishoprick being once delposed by a Synod, and not having their authority; (which

Corrupt, große, and prophant men, for no interposition to be reseived.

was grounded even upon the conflicutions of Aria Councils) this being the fecond time driven-on again the intreaties and obtestations of many worthy Bl shops and good people who adhered to him, die again renew and fix that schism. 3. When the men were otherwayes corrupt, or discovered to be groffe and prophane, although many other orthodox men did interpole for them, yet by all means it was refifted; because they still supposed such worthy men that fided with such to be mis-informed. And it's observable, that the most peaceable Synods who did most for union, as those in Africk, and that of Spain, who had received Ofins, because of the Churches of France their interposing, by that to prevent a schiff, yet were they most peremptory, as it were, in this, and refused to receive Barfilides and Martialis, as that of Carthage did refuse Apiarius, notwithstanding that Rome interpoted for them, giving this reason, That there was a necessity of having the Churches provided with faithful and holy Ministers. 4. Sometimes, and oftentimes men fentenced, though possibly with too much rigidity, if not with injustice, have yet submitted with respect to the Churches peace, etther totally, and upon that ground have again been admitted; or partially, by abstaining to act any thing contrary to such a Sentence, but for reverence thereunto waiting for some legal redresse, as in history is frequent; and it is fit it should be so in such cases where the hurt is particular, and proceedeth not from a common defign of undoing all faithful Ministers; because the making of a schism, doth more hurt than the conrending for their particular Ministery doth edific in such a case; and therefore sometimes though some men have been prefied to under value an unjust Sentence, and to continue to officiate notwithstanding, Yet out of respect to Church-authority and order, have refused till they should be admitted orderly unto the same. Indeed when the Arians drave on the deposition of their most eminent oppolers, it was otherwayes, because (as is marked in the Council of Sardica) in bearing down of them, they endeavoured to bear

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down the truth which they maintained: But where the controversic is not such, but the men orthodox and found on both fides, though possibly there may be fome particular faults or miftakes; in fuch a cafe, it fafer for either fide to cede in part, or wholly, than to keep up a division : and we conceive, when one fide -cedeth not, if the other should cede wholly, it would be most to the advantage of their cause, and to the commendation and strengthening of their authofity in the Churches of Christ.

The other occasion of debate in such Church-mat- Debates ters, is upon the defect, that is, when some are really, about conor are thought to be, connivers at guiltle men, or at niving at least desective in putting of them to trial: others a- guilty men. gain, may be thought too forward and precipitant in that, whereupop arifeth difference; and if one cede not to another at becometh the occasion of division. as may be feen in inflances formerly given : Concern-

ing which, we fay,

1. That men would remember, this is but one particular of many, that tend to the Churches good, (though indeed a main particular) and to ought not to be the rife of division, nor of continuing thereof, to the marring of the Churches peace in other things, but men ought fingly to do their duty, and therein to acquiesce, without partaking of the faults of others, whether it be by being defective, or by exceeding in that matter; and feing there may be no corrupt defign in either who may be upon these extreames, it would not be so highly aggreaged on either side.

2. We fay that as often difference in this, may breed divisions; so again, divisions do eccasion mens differing more in this: and it cannot be expected where division is, that men who are men and subject to be byaffed, can be fo fingle in receiving reftimonies of the innocency of these that differ from them, or of the guiltinesse of these that agree with them, as if there were no division at all : And again, it is impossible, that where there is a difference in some other thing, that men can think others differing from them for fingle and unbyaffed, as they suppose themselves to

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be but are still ready to construct their differing from them in this to be occasioned from some former prejudice; for, as was faid, division breedeth jealousie fulpicion, and diffruft among men, and men are name rally inclined to suspect that others drive the design of ftrengtnening themselves by the sentencing of such a perion, whereby they are fecretly induced, even unawares, to disappoint such a supposed unftraight end. which maketh them on both fides suspect every thing, dispute every thing, and readily reject every thing that cometh from the other.

Manion yather to be followed that fatisfaction berein may be bad.

- 2. We say therefore, that union would not be fulpended upon farisfaction in this, but rather umon would be pressed, that savisfaction in this may be artained; because satisfaction in this cannot be expected till there be mutual confidence of one anothers integrity: and till there be some walking together, and some further evidence of the fincerity of each other in the main bufinesse, this mutual confidence cannot be expected: and again, this cannot be obtained without an union, and so consequently union would be laid as a foundation for attaining of fatisfaction even in
- 4. It would be confidered, that oftentimes such apprehensions of extremities, which are imputed to honest and zealous men, are most groundlesse; but there being fomething in them as men, it is conceived on the other hand, because of secretly entertained jealouse, to be much more. There was nothing more caften up to the orthodox by the Novatians and Donatifis, than that they were defective in this, in admitting to, and retaining in the Ministery, men that were corrupt, Yet after many trials they were never able to prove what they alleaged upon some eminent persons In times of when it came to trial, even when such things were division, generally accounted true amongst them. This would

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rumours be adverted, that every general rumour be not accounconcerning ted a truth, especially in the times of division, for so, eminent few of the most eminent on both sides should be innopersons, not cent. Again, on the other fide, it occasioned much to be so re- heat against Chrysostom, that he had censured many of

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his Bishops, and threatned many of his Clergie; this did exceedingly provoke envy against him, and made fuch men to vent many calumnies on him, which were too much regarded, even by some orthodox and good men, who differed from him upon another account (as Epiphanius did upon the occasion of Origens writings) yet in no history it is recorded, that he aimed at the centuring of any unjustly, though he did centure with a natural vehemency, as he did every other thing; but the hiftory faith, men spake much of the number of these that were sentenced by him, and of the vehemency of his manner in reproving and cenfuring of their faults, which they accounted to be pride not confidering the faults for which he did cenfure them; But men having conceived prejudice at him, were the readier to admit of their acculations against him, as if the had been unjustly dealt with by him, and upon that same ground of prejudice at him, were the more inclinable to reftore them whom he fentenced. I di Chini II mandri i di

5. It is to be confidered also. That zeal against fuch as are juffly centurable, is most consistent with a spirit of union in the Church, as appeareth by the former inflances of men most tender of union, and yet most zealous in this : yea, these two go rogether; because zeal for the Churches edification constraineth to union, and doth also presse the removing of corrupt unfaithful Ministers, which, next to division in a Church, is the greatest plague of a Church. Therefore these things would be adverted, 1. That the purging of the Church of fuch, and the work of union, would be joyntly respected, otherwayes if union be sleighted, inwill hazard the falling in too nearly with the Schisms of the Novatians and Donatists, which have been so hurtful to the Church. 2. Union when it is Yet unionis in competition with the deposing of some unfaithful to be premen, and both cannot be obtained together, it ought ferred to to be preferred, as we see the Apostle doth, 2 Carto. the censur-6. who will not centure in such a case, left he state a ing of some schism; for, the continuing of such in a Church, is in- unfaithful deed a hurr, feing they are uselesse, and in a great part men.

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would be confidered also, that the division being in the case supposed, where men are orthodox and pious on both fides, it is not to exceedingly to be feared, that either men palpably corrupt in doctrine, or convertation should be entertained upon the one fide or that men useful in the Church and blamelesse in their conversations, should be crushed upon the other. 4. It would follow also that union should be no prejudice to the ridding of the Church of corrupt Ministers, but ging out of that it should be studied where there is need, became it is a fruit of the fame spirit (to be zealous against corrupt men) from which mecknelle and moderation to proceed; and there ward these who are not such Zeel, as an unfaith fore if there be any fuch object ful Minister , (as it is not like that ever the Chunch was, or shall be free of such) then ought men to better themselves faithfully in the removing of such. It is marked and commended in the Angel of Ephofus Rev. 2. 2, 3. That he was eminent in parience and enduring, and yet so zealous in this, that he could en dure no unient Minister, but tryed such as called themselves Apostles, &c. which contemperature or mixture is exceedingly commended: And in reference to the scope which we are upon, zeal in this, is not only a duty as at other times, but a special mean having influence on the procuring of union; because so, one of the great stumblings that bath been in the Church to make the Ministery contemptible is remove ed, and a practical evidence of mens zeal is given, which tendeth to lay a ground of confidence of them in the hearts of others; fo, also men are keeped from falling under the tentation of luke-warmnelle, and forgetting of every duty, but the supporting of the fide, at least, that which usually is impured in such a case, is removed; and also by this, men would find the necessity of bearing with many things in others, who may in the main he supposed to be honest: And however

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however, it is the way to be approven before God, and to have a reftimonic in the consciences of others. All which conduce exceedingly to union; whereas universal cellation from this, as if there were no such matter to work upon, and obstructing formally, yea, or materially or virtually any thing thereof, doth exceedingly tend to the fixing of division, and cooling of the affections of many that look on, without which, that is, warmed affections, there is little accesse to hearty union.

6. We say, that this duty of purging would not be Purging to in its vehemency pressed, either under a division, or not to be while union is not confirmed, as when a Church is in much pressed condition; because, that were to give strong sed till uniphysick to an unsettled weak body, that might rather on be fixed, fir the humours to the prejudice of the whole, than timove them: Therefore we conceive, that sobriety

ad prudence would be used here, in moderating of the exercise of this duty, till the union be confirmed. and, as it were, by preparations the body be disposed for the same : Therefore if faults be not groffe, evidences clear, and a persons unfruitfulnesse or hurtfulnesse demonstrable, (in which cases no difference amongst fuch parties as are to be united, is to be feared) It is fafer for the Church to abstain the same, than to hazard the opening or ruffling of a wound scarcely cured, by the unleasonable pressing of such a duty. The Apostle doth in several cases spare censures of unfaithful men, out of respect to the Churches good, as hath been formerly hinted; and as the judicious divine Mr. Gillespy (who yet cannot be branded with luke-warmnesse in this duty) in his Aarons rod, maketh out, and doth give inftances of feveral cases, wherein this forbearance is called-for. In fum, we suppose that having to do in such a case with such perfons, it is more fafe for men to do their own dury, keeping the peace of the Church, and to leave others to do according to the manifestnesse of things as they shall answer before God, as to their seeking the good of His Church; and if this prevail not with such men for ordering them in their duty, will any think that the

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keeping up, or threatening of division, will prevail? Laffly. It would be confidered, if such ends as any fide would propole, either in keeping in or purging out of men who are thought fit or unfit respectively. can be attained without union, fo as with it. Therefore feing that is a thing which belongeth to Government, and men are to be fwayed in fuch Acts by what conduceth most to edification, when they cannot ateain the length they would (as we suppose men shall never do, in this matter of purging) they then 'are to walk by this rule of choofing what comparatively is most edifying, as was formerly said. Sometimes also difference hath been about the excomunicating of perfons, or re-admitting again to communion : bur what concerneth this may be somewhat understood from the former grounds, wherein extremities would be flunned, and the Churches peace, and the Authority of the Ordinances studied : Allo, we have otherwayer beyond our purpose become so long, (and possibly and nauseam usque) in other things, we shall therefore for bear particular descending into this, but proceed in the generals proposed.

CHAP. XVIII.

The fears of mif-government for the time to come; and remedies thereof.

posed, as that whereabout differences and divisions do arise, is, in reference to Government for the time to come, and resolves in this, Who shall have chief hand in the decision of matters that after may fall out, supposing the union to be made up. This resulteth from the present disidence and prejudice which each hath in reference to other, and from that impression that men have, that there will be a driving of sides, according to power, even under a concluded union: And indeed somewhat may be feared and expected, at least for a time, considering mens distance in such a case; for, if dissidence and suspiction

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fulpition be come to that height under divisions, that one will not truft another in some petry particular fact that is past; or lay by jealousie where no proof is, notwithstanding of all solemn attestations; it's no marvel that in matters of greater confequence which are to come, they do not easily give them credit. This is often the greatest business to be composed in a difference: hence it is, that sometimes bygones, which have been the rife of the division, may be removed, when as yet this cannot be composed because there is no way conceivable how both parties may have the chief hand in Government, and neither being willing to cede to the other, either from a fecret ground of fleighting one another, or from that root of fulpition whereby they conceive all loft that the other is able to carry over them, whereby from fear of hazarding the Churches good condition, they run here in a certain prejudice, and, in some sense, fall in that inconvenience, which a writer observeth on the contending of two Bishops, expressed in this as the ground of their division, unus ut praeffet alter ne fubeffet, fed neuter ut prodeffet ; which is often-times, on the matter, too true in all such contests, this last being a confequent of the former two.

This difference may be confidered two wayes, 1. As it pretendeth a diffatisfaction with the persons who are to govern; some upon the one side, thinking it unfit to joyn with prophane men; fome, upon the other, disdaining to joyn with Schismaticks. In this firait were the Fathers of the Council of Carthage in their dealing with the Donatifts; some of them afferting, on the one fide, That there was no uniting with luch as the generality of the Catholicks were; and Angustine often circib the word of Primianus, given-in to them as an Answer to the defire of a Conference, Indignum eft ut in unum conveniant filii Martyrum, & progenies traditorum; that is, It is a most unseemly thing that the fons of Martyrs, and the brood of Traditors [hould affemble together in one place. On the other hand, they were presed from Rome and parts adjacent, not to unite with these Schismaticks the Donatificas may

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be feen in that Council; yet did they find it their duty. to feek union with them notwithstanding, and to admit, that fuch of them as were put before from their Churches, should be repossessed by him that was appointed Cognitor, and deputed by the Emperour in that Conference, ut eo modo eos ad conferendum etiam beneficies invitaret; that is, That fo he might invite them to conference at least by such benefits. This principle, we suppose, ought not, nor will not stick in the hearts of fuch men, and in such a case, as is presupposed, and it leadeth to a These, That there is no communion in Government to be keeped, where, upon any of the former accounts, men are displeased with such persons as are joyned therein with them: and though affection, and fometimes inclination, being ftirred with prejudice and discontent, will be ready to make some fuch practices to be plaufible, which do inter this; yer, I suppose, the Thesis it self will not be maintained, more than such a ground will warrant. Separation in any other Ordinance; and the grounds formerly laid down in feveral parts of this discourse, will not admit of fuch a principle, which, if admitted, would exclude union for ever, We shall therefore passe this.

The second and main difficulty then, is, In the ordering of things fo for the time to come as the ends of union and government may thereby be obtained, and that nothing that may be justly feared by one fide or other, may be altogether fleighted. In reference to this, it will not be expected that we should be particular or fatisfying, yet not to leave it altogether im-We shall, first, propose some general confiderations, to mollifie the sharpnesse of division upon 2. Offer some general helps, which in this account. fuch cases may be thought on. 3. Lay down some advertisements upon supposition that full satisfaction

It muft be be not obtained.

Such a satisfaction as neither is ed.

We propose these confiderations to be thought on concerning this, 1. In such a thing it is impossible that men on both, or either fide, can expect full fatiffully fatisfis faction to their mind, or even fimply to their light; because men have not the carving out of what is good

to the Church simply before them, but comparatively and in reference to such and such a circumstantiate case; and therefore must resolve, that respect must be had to the satisfaction of others as of themselves; for, it is not the satisfaction of one side that maketh up union, but of both: and therefore it must be resolved to be such a satisfaction to both, as neither is sully and simply satisfied therein; and for that cause it's not to be expected that in such a case all inconveniences which are possible, can be satisfyingly prevented, or questions concerning the same answered. I doubt the any case there will be full satisfaction as to these.

*2. Let it be confidered, if the abstaining of uniting will prevent these inconveniences upon either side, and if it doth not rather bring on greater, and moe upon the Church; and if inconveniences sway, which are lesser and more uncertain in the one case, those which are greater and more inevitable, ought to sway more in the other; for, it's already presupposed, that joyning doth not make one guilty in these inconve-

mencies, more than abstaining doth.

Yea, 3. Let it be confidered, if by continued division, men be not necessarily guilty of the inconveniences that follow it; because (to say so) they follow it per se, or naturally and necessarily, whereas the other follows upon union but by accident at the most; Other considerations, former a mentioned, are also to have weight, and ought to be remembered here.

We come now to confider the helps which may in The thing part be useful to prevent these sears. In reference to seared is which we would, I consider, that the matter seared, not corrupt is not the bringing-in of unlound doctrine in the ge-doctrine nor neral, nor the altering of practical rules to the streng- a wrong thening of prophanity, But it is the misapplication Governos good rules already made, especially in reference to ment. these. 1. The admitting of unfit Officers in the Church. 2. The deposing of such as deserve the same. 3. The decision of some particular differences that may occasionally occur in the carrying on of Church-affairs, wherein men may apprehend and

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fear partiality, as they shall occur; which grounds of fear upon either fide, we may gather from what hath

been formerly hinted.

Concerning the matter of depolition, we have forken already and shall say no more. Concerning the other two points, we may confider them either as they are concerning things past, before the union be madeup during the division; or, as they relate to what may

Concerning what is past in such debated particu-

lars we have spoken already, and, it seems, one of

these three wayes must be taken in reference thereun-

occasionally fall out afterward.

to. 1. Either by waving of these things (if they be such as may be waved) fo that without infifting in them, they may be buried; or, by one parties ceding; or, by a mutual composure, they may be instantly setled. 2. If that cannot be, the union is not to be suspended thereon, but some mutually may be appointed to labour in the same afterward, that with consent it may

Some acceptable to both.

Union not

cular.

to be suspen-

very parti- be brought to a point, which is not to be thought desperate, although it be not ended for the time. This way of mutual conferring is natural, as being an approven mean for composing of differences of any Some parti- fert, in any place, at any time. 3. If that please culars to be not, or attain not the end, the matter may be amireferred to cably referred to some acceptable to both, who may be trusted with the ultimat decision in such particulars: neither is the unbecoming Church-authority fo to condefeend or Ministers in such matters to be submissive. For, t. it is no matter of doctrine wherein they are to decide, or wherein either party is to acquielce, but it is in some particular practical thing. 2. The Submission is not in a difference betwixt's thing finful and a thing lawful, but betwixt two things that are lawful, which of them comparatively is the most expedient to the Church in such a case; wherein I conceive, it were not implicit walking, though men should acquiesce in the judgment of fome others in fuch things, more than in their own. 2. It would feem, that that advice of the Apostle's, 1 Cor, 6. (Is there not a wife man amongst you? &c.) is propoled

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proposed in the general, to prevent all such strife and contention, as doth bring scandal with it : and therefore ought not to be excluded in this case, seing there is a gift of prudence and wildom given unto the Church for the governing of her felf, and is more eminently given to one than to another, even as the gift of knowledge is for doctrine; and therefore we conceive that in such cases, such may warrantably be trufted with fuch particulars, feing it might be expected that they would endeavour to make the best thereof for the good of the Church. In that conference with the Donatifts, we find that the Donatiffs are defired to name one for themselves, who might joyn with the Cognitor appointed to judge of fuch particulars and matters of fact, as were in debate betwist the Catholicks and them; & their refusing thereof was looked upon as an evidence of their not defiring an end of the controversie: Neither is it to be thought, that Augustine and nigh 300. Bishops with him who yeelded thereto, did undervalue the matter in debate between them, though they were content to have differences in fact fo decided. We find also, that for the removing almost of all the forementioned schisms, there were particular men, either deputed by Synods, or commissionated by adjacent Churches, or called by themselves, for the composing amicably of fuch practical differences as were the occasion of their rents: And, it may be, that were this more used for composing of Church-differences, the height that oftentimes they come to in particulars, might be prevented.

We here think not fit, that fuch things should be Such things decided by Church-judicatories by a meer authorita- are not to tive decision: not out of any dis-respect to Church- be decided Judicatories; but because, as was formerly hinted in by a meer the general grounds, Church-judicatories are fitter authorifor preventing such divisions than for removing of tative way. them: And further, a Church-judicatory being in all publick divisions a party, such decision would look liker submission (which men are not so easily induced unto) than union. Beside, such a way is

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more ready to breed heart-burnings in fuch things as have been the matter of contest formerly and to is palpably in hazard to brangle an union fcarce begun Alfo, men will more eafily bear any decition wherein themselves have a consent, though it were mediately by committing it to some others, than where there is only a necessity of obeying; and especially where such prejudice is conceived to be in the Judge, as in the case supposed. This may be clearer from what maybe said afterward.

For regulating things which may occasionally fall

Better for a bear many to brangle unzon.

time to for- out, for the time to come, we may propose the general helps to be confidered. 1. That there bean things, than abstinence from what may readily seem to prove the occasion of any difference, at least for a time: and it is better to forbear many things, than to brangle union, or grieve a party with whom we have united; Yet generally it appeareth, that it is driving and not forbearing, that breedeth division, and also grieveth men after union, and tempts them to rue the same. Neither is this a bar to any from a necessary duty, it only regulateth men in the doing of necessary duties, so as they may eschew the guilt of renting the Church, or grieving of others; or, at most, it relateth but to the tyming, manner, or some other circumstance of a neceffary duty: As suppose in the matter of planting a Church, a division should in all appearance be like to arise. It is more fit that it should be for a time fuspended, and other endeavours for facilitating the same used, yea, ere a breach be, that even other persons be fought out; for, though it be duty to plant the Church, and that with none but such as are worthy, yet it is not alway a necessary duty to plant such a particular Church at fuch a time, and in fuch a manner, and with such a worthy person; Yea, it were better for the Church, and more peace to the persons mind, that such a particular place should vake for several years, than that the peace of the Church, or composednesse of her Judicatories, should be marred thereby, and so in other matters wherein forbearance 15 called-for.

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a In fuch a cate; doubtful practices would be ab Doubtful flained; and whatever fide men choose in any occur- practices to ring particular, it would be fuch, and in fuch a man- be abstainne done; as may be convincingly appropriate unto ed from. any of whatloever fide; for, it is often uncertain things or disputable at the most that breed differences amongst judicious fober men : men therefore would fomeway confine themselves within unquestionable things for a time, and not only have respect to their own consciences in such things, and to what is right in it felf, but also to others, who want not their own suspicions and jealousies, and who by their deed may either be foon tempted, or grieved; both which they ought to fhun.

3. We conceive, that it is useful in such a time to Many brohave many brotherly consultations, and conferences, therly conconcerning such things as may be moved, that things ferences to come not in abruptly; for, fo sometimes men may be prevent afarprifed with somewhat they have not heard of, and brupt furbecome jealous where there is no ground: Also, it is prifals. an evidence of respect so to communicate thoughts, and men may thus know what is fit to be moved, and what not; whereas otherwayes, men may be foon engaged in opposition to a motion, and not so easily brought off. This communication would nor fo much be by appointment of others, as voluntary, and out of respect between particular persons : Also, it would be respectively done to the person with submission to his reason, that is, if he seem reasonably diffatisfied therewith, and do not rellish the fame, the motion would be forborn, at least for a time, and the other waited upon therein, till he come up to it, or at least connive at it; this would breed confidence and make the designs joynt. And this way that is to be followed in the first moving of things, would also be continued in the promoving thereof.

4. Matters of difficulty would rather be committed difficulty to deputed persons than instantly decided, especially rather comin superiour Judicatories. The reasons are, r. Be- mited, than caule ordinarily superiour Judicarories cannot walt instantly the time that fretred spirits will require to bring boils decided.

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nesses of difficulty to any cordial close. 2. It feemeth respective like when they are so taken notice of, and fleighting like when things are haftened. 3. Neither so are all after murmurings and rifings of heart prevented, when things are not heard to the full. 4. Because time may do many things, and that may be easie ere long which is difficult now. 4. In such deputations there is more accesse to have respect to the appointing of fuch persons, as may most probably effectuate the thing for the Churches good; and, no question, a Church-judicatory is to take the way which may do the thing best, aswell as a particular person, and they are to abstain from debatable things. and hafty conclusions, even as particular persons are and oftentimes experience teacheth, that fuch Commissions expede many things, which more frequent Affemblies could not fo well do. Hence we will find, that it was ordinary in the primitive time upon such grounds, to give Commission to some few to do things; and particularly, that often-mentioned Council of Carthage did think good to dislolve, and to depute so many for deciding that, in matters of discipline, which they could not by themselves so well be able to compasse.

Not unfit, fom persons were defigned for a time to compose occasional differences.

5. We conceive also, that it were not unfit in such cases (for a time at least) to have some designed by mutual confent, who might compose such occasional differences as possibly might arise; or, who at least might have so much power as to restrain and keep down the same from being a new ground of division to the Church, or matter of great grief to any party. This is not to constitute a new Judicatory, but according to the light of nature to provide a mean for keeping up of order, and preventing of confusion, when, in respect of the present distemper of spirit, there is no possibility for attaining that end by the constituted Judicatory: Nature in such a case teaches all men to feek for order in every fociety, and it being supposed that there cannot be a joyning in ordinary Judicatories without this, and that it might be attained with this, it's hard to think, that that is de-

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nied to the Church which agreeth to all other focieties; or, that it can be faid, that it is better to want union in Church-judicatories, than to have it fo qualified. Sure some Churches would, and do think much to attain this length, as appeareth by the many voluntary affociations which worthy men have been led unto, for the keeping of order, and attaining of some union, who are yet good friends to Churchgovernment; and the reason that warranteth them in their deed, to wir, the necessity of union and order in the Church, and the impossibility that there is of any further mean for attaining the same, will warrant this practice in the case supposed; for, the question is not fimply, What is the best constituted Government of a Church in a good condition? but it is, Whether a Government with such a qualification, be better than no Government, or a divided Government, it being supposed that no other in the circumstantiate case can be attained?

It would be confidered also, That such a voluntary reference to such persons, doth not include any authority, as to ordain Ministers, or depose, &c. but it is to be in matters of sact, as in the structs or unsituesse of such a Plantation, of such a Processe, and the like; which was mentioned in reference to differences pass, for, what was said there, is also binding here.

Neither can this be thought any limitation or weakning of Church-authority and power: For, 1. It doth make that authority and power stronger than formerly it was without this, in the case so circumstantiate; and the question still is to be considered not in these, but in hypopthese. 2. Because this is for the This tenderecovery and strengthening of an authority that for eth to rethe time is not in exercise, at least in such an extent, cover and it is to give the same a beeing, as it were, and to strength to bring it to its former lustre; as if a weak man should Judicabe led, or get a staff in his hand till he recover; or, as tories. if a disjoynted leg should be senced about otherwayes than one that is whole, and so be the sooner in capacity to walk without these. 3. This is but a temporary accessory help, and is not pleaded-for as an essential

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of Government, but only as a lawful expedient when be no it cannot be wanted. 4. It may be considered that it sho pollibly no use may be thereof, and if so, it can be most no encroachment; and if there be need thereof, lo as le pr things cannot cordially be composed otherwayes, is it fach not expedient then, for the preventing of a further in- Chur convenience? 5. I suppose it is not inconsistent matter with Civil Authority, when union is made-up betwixt two Nations, or in the same Nations, especially to be where Authority hath been brangled, that some by the W joynt confent be chosen for deciding of such things as seend may occasion a new breach: and there are many inflances of this in hittory; for, the being of Authority innes is cumulative to the means that men are naturally more furnished with, for the preserving of union and order inty and therefore it cannot exclude fuch prudential confiderations.

thority.

Neither can it be thought inconfiftent with the nature of Church-authority and Government: For And is con- 1. If it be agreeable to the principles of nature and fiftent with found reason, it cannot be inconsistent with Church-Ministerial government, which hath its own policy grounded up-Church-au- on thefe: And although the form of Government be not to be gathered from these nor the ends whichither should aim ar who govern, yet the manner how fuch a Government is to attain these ends, is in positive things to be regulated by them; hence fometimes men are to use intrearies and perswasions, somtimes threatnings and authoritative means, according as the end may be attained. 2. Although Church-government in the general be determined, and men be not free to affociate or nor, yet there is much, as to the exercise thereof in affociating, and the particular manner mutually agreed upon, which still may regulate circumfrances, though they cannot alter the nature of the thing. 12. It is not necessary that Church-authority Mould be alwayes exercised in every thing; for, it is not to be exercised but when it is to the Churches edification, and there is no fuch Church-authority as edifies not; and therefore, if in such cases the interposing of Church-authority in the ultimat decision of matters

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hen be not edifying, it is no encroachment upon it to fav that it should not be exercised in that case; and so at the the most, that which dependeth upon this reference, is, ono as ly prudentially to discern and judge, if in such and is it such a case, it be fit for the Churches edification, that r in- Church-authority should decide in such a particular ftent matter, wherein not the authority or power, but the be- prindence, zeal, and faithfulnesse of such persons are ially to be respected for the obtaining of a forbearance. by We will find the great Apostle oftentimes conde- The great gests freeding to lay by his authority, and to intreat and Apostle of beleech, especially in the matter of union; and some ten layeth ority dines to advise, when he thought his intreaties might aside Aurally more kindly prevail; or, when he thought his autho- thority. det rity might be questioned, or his authorizative acting con- hazard's schism: which grounds, being moral, may warrant a Church in such a case unto the end of the world to follow his example. 5. Seing union is For maintained when it is weak by the same means by and which it is begun, (for union is nor compleated when rch- feme agreement is closed) and feing, as we faid, an authoritative way is not fittest for conceiving and bringing forth the same; So neither will it be for giving of it fuck and milk till it be able to abide fironger meat. 6. Seing Church-authority is parental, and that of the tenderest fort, it is not unbecoming that it condescend even to the weaknesse and childish distempers of some members, supposing there be such standing in need thereof; and if such condescending may joyn them in and keep them in, in their own place, and prevent even their fnares and miscarriages more effectually than authoritative means will do, which are for the time suspected by them; ought not fuch means to be followed? And if they should continue in their infirmity to flumble at the peremptory using of authoritative means and the denial of this; will it be thought a sufficient ground to exoner men from having accession unto their fall? or will it look like that tendernesse and condescendency which mothers and nurses ought to have to children, even in their childish and unreasonable moodes? 7. This also

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also mis-flares the question, because its here to be confidered (as was faid) not what is the nature of Church-authority fimply, but comparatively, what is fittest for procuring the edification of the Church, and for a time to be a mean for recovering her to a full authoritative manner of acting, which is now supposed to be brangled, Beside, if the recovery of Church-authority be a duty requiring means to be used suitable to that end; then the use of this mean must be a duty: because, in the case supposed, it is the most probable mean for attaining to that. If he be faid, that it is a more easie way to acquiesce in the authoritative determination, and it were more fit for men to submit to that. Answ. That supposeth no present diffemper to be, and answereth not to the case flated, which is upon the supposition that men do not that; Is not this more fit for present edification, and more probable for attaining to a full authorizative way of acting, than the continuing of a division with out condescending in this? In the last place, also it may be considered. That, the exercising of Church authority in particular cases, bic onunc, is an affirmation tive precept, and therefore doth not bind ad fempera according to the common rule of affirmative precepts, it cannot therefore be unfuitable to it, or the precepts by which it is commanded, to adde fuch qualificant ons as are mentioned in the case presupposed.

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Some advertisements concerning the overtures pro-

To come now to some advertisements according as we did propose; we must shortly put them together, lest we be too prolix in every thing.

1. Then it would be adverted, That there is no peremptorinesse urged in any of the former helps or remedies, but if other means may be found more effe-

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chai, all these are to cede. Only this is intended, that if no more probable and effectual means be found out, or applied, that it is better on such like grounds to unite than to continue a division.

ought to be adverted. That there may be, and ought to be such a condescending, in the concluding of and fixing on the means, (especially for the time to come) as by the expressing of time, manner, and other particular circumstances of things, the sears of both may be someway guarded against, and each by shewing respect to other, may endeavour the removing of their mutual jealousies; for, seing jealousies are mutual, it will be too much for one fide to think that the other should wholly credit them, if there be no condescending by them.

3. Although there should be sears that things should again break out, and that therefore it is to no purpose to indertake a way of union, not every way satisfying, yet it would be essayed, and if the Lord prevent that sears such an objection is loosed; if some interruption come again to hazard an outbreaking, these who are accessory thereto, will be the more guilty, and others who are innocent therein, may have more peace,

than if it had not been effayed.

4. If union cannot be compleated in every thing, then their would be endeavours to fix it to far as is actainable, and to prevent the increasing of division, that if there may not be a positive union, at least, a positive division and opposition may be shunned.

of luch divisions, men may mutually concur in that wherein there is no division for the edification of the Church: for, division in one particular ought not, nor will not warrantably hinder mutual acting in other things where there is none: As for instance, if it be an interruption in carrying on the work of God joyntly in Government, because of some difference concerning that; yet if there be accessed to promove the edification of the body by an united way of preaching, that is to be followed and improven, as we see it is done in some places where Government is not allowed.

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6. Whatever the case be, we suppose it is duty to make the best thereof when men cannot win the length they would.

CHAP. XX:

What is incumbent to Magistrates and People for remedying this evil.

Trefteth now that we should speak something to what is incumbent to Magistrates and People, for remedying of such an evil in the Church; but being keeped so long on the former, we cannot enter on this; We shall only lay down these few generals.

1. That neither of them ought to be offended or stumbled at such divisions, or thereby be brought to have lesse esteem either of the Gospel, the Ordinance of Government, or Worship, or the Ministery and Ministers of Jesus Christ; much lesse would there be insulting over, or advantage taken against, these upon this occasion, as is recorded to the insamy of several persons; but on the contrary, all would be affected therewith, as with a most dangerous snare, and searful plague: And to this purpose Augustine doth seriously presse his Bonisace, Governour of Africk, that he should not stumble at the divisions of the Church, and particularly Epist. 40.

2. All would fearch if they have had any finful influence upon the procuring of such a stroke; for, if it be a plague and wo to them, they would look back to the rise thereof; who knows but the sins of Magistrates or People in their fretting at the Ordinance of Government, despising of the Ministery, not receiving of the Word nor walking answerably thereto, and such like, may have procured this division from the Lord, as a judicial stroke on them to harden them in their former sin, and thereby to strengthen their tentation to despise all the Ordinances more to their own ruine, as may be gathered from what hath been formerly spoken?

3. All would be careful to abstain from what may

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further or heighten the breach, and by all means endeavour not to be engaged in such fidings; for, that often encourageth others, and encrealeth and fixeth a rent; and in experience it is feen, that thefe schifms were ever most dangerous, and most difficultly removed, wherein people came to party, and fide with opposit sides in the division: and seing the Spirit in the Scripture, doth forbide people as well as Ministers to divide, this must be their duty, not to joyn in such a division. Also, it unfits them to get good-from Minifters, or to do good for removing of a rent amongst them. And we are fure, If doubtful disputations, vain langlings, and such like questions, that tend not to edification, be to be eschewed by people, then we conceive that such as are in the cases presupposed, may be so esteemed of.

4. They are by all respective means seriously to preffe the abstaining from, and composing of such differences, by their ferious representations of the ills thereof, and exhortations, according to their places to have the same remedyed. And were this more amongst people, upon occasions in due manner, to testifie their lober resentment of such evils in the general, and defire of union, and condescendency for attaining the same, fo far as is fit, it would much more become the fobriety of tender Christians, and be much more effectual for this end, than to be heightening and aggreging the miscarriage of any one party to another, or carrying reports or informations true or falle, which may kindle humours to a flame that are hot and fmoaking already. It would affect a heart to hear the regraits and expostulations that constantine, Gratian, and others, have anent the divisions of Church-men in their times and their exhortations to remedy the fame.

5. All forts would endeavour to be in good tearms with God, in respect of their own particular conditions: and when all falleth, they would ftill be inffantly dealing with God by prayer for healing of the fame, as accounting it a great plague, even to them while FINNO

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CHAP. XXI.

The grounds and motives of the defired union.

The laft thing proposed to be spoken to, was the grounds whereby union on such like tearms, in fuch cases, might be pressed: but seing somethings to this purpose have been already here and there inserted, upon feveral occasions; and feing these who are mainly concerned in this, are supposed to be most renderly zealous of the Churches good, and fo not to stand much in need of many motives to perswade to this which doth so nearly concern the same; and fearing to heap up too many words in a marter to clear, we shall forbear to infift, and only propose some confiderations to the conscience of the tender Reader. especially in reference to some particular circumfrances, which sometimes may occur in the case of division. And let God Himself, who is the God of peace, of love, and of order, put them home to consciences with a strong hand-

First, The consciencious Reader may consider, when all is well weighed that is formerly proposed, with what may besides occur to himself, If the study of union be not a most necessary thing, and if without the essaying of these and such like means, according to his interest and calling, he can have peace, as being sufficiently exonered in his duty. In reference to this great end; and if there can be solid quietnesse to continue division upon the grounds mentioned, and to sleight the pursuing after union, if attainable, upon these or such like tearms as are proposed, especially

in these and such other cases.

1. When a Church is under external croffes and afflictions, and by Gods dispensation is cast into the furnace; to be therein strugling and wrestling one with another, and, as if it were in the time of the Churches greatest peace and calm, to be contending for matters of such concernment. O how unsuitable it! Though indeed condescending be called for at

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any time, yet certainly, much more and in an especiall manner at fuch a time. The judicious, and great Divine Calvine, doth, upon this account, exceedingly aggrege the divisions amongst some English in Frankford, who being banished in the dayes of Queen Mary for the same Religion, did even there contend for matters of little moment. This (faith he, Epift. 200.) was exceeding intempestive, or unumous, and exceeding offensive to the Church of Christ, and unbecoming their case: And although he utterly disapproved these ceremonies as unbecoming the Church of Christ Yet doth (Epift. 206.) presse moderation on both fides, using these words, Sicuti autem eos qui à vobis diffentiebant bortatus fum , ut qua poffent moderatione inflecterent; ita mibi displicuit, nibil vicissima parte vestra necedi vel remitti, that is, As I did exbort thefe who were not of one mind with you, to fretch themselves with all sosible moderation; So it did displease me, that there was upon the other hand by you, nothing ceded or remitted.

The fecond case is, When a Church by division, is laid open to grosse hereticks, who wait the occasion of such a division, that they may make (as it were) an infal upon her. Division should be shunned at any time, but in such a case, union should be at any sate, of warrantable condescendency, purchased. In that difference between Eusebius and Basis, at first it was sufficient to eschew division; for which end at Nazianzens desire, Basis removed; but when the Arians were like to take advantage thereof, he did again return, and by his condescending made up a persect union, thereby to stop the door gainst the inbreaking of errour upon that people: Which sact is ever highly commended, even in respect of the sea-sonable nesse thereof, in reference to that tentation.

3. A third case wherein union would especially be studied. is, When there is little help from wichout, to the sustaining of the Government and order of the Church; but men in that respect, have and take liberty to act as they will; because then union is the only wall, and if that fall, there is nothing to guard. Hence it is, that necessity, especially in such a case,

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hath made men think upon affociations and mutual bonds, for the establishing and confirming of union.

4. It is, when some of the Ordinances, especially the Ordinance of Government, is questioned, or when they are despised, and someway made contemptible before men: in such cases, for respect to the Ordinances of Christ, men ought to condescend to the uttermost, and to endeavour the recovery of the Ordinances of Christ to their former beauty, which is impossible to be attained without this; because division

maketh all to appear contemptible.

4. It is, when there feemeth to be time special nick, or choak, or crisis (to speak so) that is, When, if there be not present uniting and gripping, in all probability, the division and breach will grow greater and wider, and be more difficultly removable. In fuch a case men ought to firetch themselves with all the moderation that is possible (as Calvins expression is) if they may now, at least, through Gods good hand up. on them, come to some agreement, and taking grip (to fay fo) while it is possible. And if each of thele alone, strongly presse the study of union, even, beyond what is ordinary; O how very strongly will all of them, put rogether; presseit! And how actively should men, zealous for God and His precious Ordinances, and tender of the edification of fouls, beffir themselves to follow after peace in such a vehemently urging case?

The second thing that would be seriously considered and thought upon, is, What is the possibility, and feasablenesse, and accesse to attainment, of such a desirable end. It is true, tenaciousnesse in some, may make union in the least things impossible, especially such as may his grace, gifts, esteem, or the dependance of others upon him because of these, have some special stroke and influence upon the thing: But the

Reader would confider,

1. If someway the stick be not at himself, and if there be not something possible to him, in reference to union, which yet he hath not condescended to; for, although he hath not power over the wills of other, yet hath he over his own.

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2. Let him confider, If the ills that follow division be not great and certain: and if fo. if the stopping at any step of the condescending called for, will bear out the conscience against the cryes of so many reproaches that are caften upon Ordinances by some; against the many challenges that will arise upon the miscarriages of others, that are occasioned by such divisions; and against the impression that the weighting and fadning of many honest hearts, will have with it one day? And if he dare flep in to judgment, without fear of being found faulty in any measure in respect of the forementioned inconveniencles; if his condescending, as is called-for, might have prevented them.

2. He would confider, if at the appearing of Jefus Christ, when all such affections shall be laid by and disputings will not have place, nor recriminations be admitted; if, I say, in such a case he may not have more peace in condescending upon either side, as is propofed, for the good of the Church, than by refufing the

fame to keep up the division.

4. It would be ferioufly pondered, whether union by such condescendency, or division without it, may be most profitable and edifying to the Church; and if any of these things be of such consequence, as to stand in the way of the Churches further edification.

3. The Reader may confider, if ever in the practice of the primitive times, or in the writings of orthodox and fober Divines, old or late, any so circumstantiated division will be found warrantable, or if out of the heat of debate, they would probably have fluck at any condescendenfion that is here required upon either hand.

6. It may be confidered, If all the present reformed Churches being appealed unto in such a case, were ingly and impartially to give judgement thereauent, whether it could upon any ground be thought, that they would judge such condescending unlawful upon either fide, if by it and no otherwayes union were to be attained?

7. It would be confidered, That if all that ever have written on this subject of old or late were confulted, that (for ought I know) it will be found that

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the condescension that they allow for attaining, and preferving of union in the Church, will be of a larger extent, than any thing in this case required; And, I suppose, hardly will it be found, that from such writings there will be a flicking allowed upon any fuch thing as is proposed. And will it be fafe, at once to

condemn formany?

8. The Reader may reflect on himfelf, and try what are his thoughts of former divisions, and if he doth not approve most ordinarily these that were most peaceable, and alwayes thefe that in fuch a circumstantiated case did study condescendency; and if he doth not within himself judge, that it had been more for the Churches good, that fuch divisions had been semoved upon such like tearms, than that they should have been continued; and if there be not in his bosome a kind of indignation at the rigid drivers of fuch a divition, whereby he may know and difcern what is is fit to be done in the prefent case, if he were as im-

partial in it, as in the other.

9. He may confider, If union be not made up upon fuch or the like tearms; and if upon other tearms it be impossible. What will follow, or what usually doth follow in such cases? Doth not bitternesse grow to a height amongst orthodox men, as if each of them were enemies to the truth of Christ, and enemies to one anothers persons? names also are often imposed upon each by the other, as if they were notboth of the fame body; or, as if it were good fervice to God, and advantage to the Truth, by such designations to render one another odious, contemptible and uselesse: As these that refused to joyn with the Church of Rome in Easter, were called Quartedecimani; whereupon followeth abstinence in communion with one another, turning afide unto errour and novelty amongst some; indulgence if not connivance at, and compliance with groffe and corrupt men, amongst others; coldnesse in zeal to God, and love one to another; and uplitting in the power and practice of godlinesse amongst all, and many such like woful effects. And shall, alace, shall the weight of all these sad and Religion-ruining conse-

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quents, be flated upon the refusing of such condefeendency as is here called for? God forbid.

10. It would be ferioufly confidered, what may be the thoughts of the generation that shall succeed? Shall fuch a division be propagated to them, and they made heirs thereto? Shall not they either continue milerable under such a condition, and that for ever, with fuch heightening circumstances as cannot but follow? (and will any ingenuous and posterity-compassionating Reader think of this, and not be affected therewith?) Or they must endeavour the recovery of union with much more difficulty than it may now be; and if so, certainly that generation will be in hazard to curse these that went before them, who did bring them forth under the necessity of continuing pnder the fin, fnare, and torturing-plague of divisions; or, at least, of being in so greatly puzling and perplexing straits, ere they could expede themselves out of the fame.

11. If yet the Reader be not convinced positively to joyn and further union in fuch a case, let him yet confider if he hath sufficient clearnesse to oppose and cry down the same as finful, and if he hath liberty & freedom to cry down all that ever have approved, or do approve the removing of a division upon such terms as these proposed? and if he dare with confidence from his own particular diffatisfaction, mar the fame amongst others? and if possibly he might not have more freedom negatively to lye by, and neither directly nor indirectly to be the occasion of such an offence; and if the Church might not have more profit, and he more peace in so doing? and if he be fatisfied, he may confider whether it were not better to endeavour such a composure, though to the diffatisfaction of some (who possibly may afterward lay by their discontent) than out of preposterous respect to them, to hazard the ruine of all? which is, as it were, to bring a leaking ship to land a storm, though some of the company, upon some mistake, oppose the same.

12. Let him confider, if ever condescending in such things hath been observed to bring any hurr to the

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Church; whereas selfwilleduesse (whereof a Minister especially should be free) hath alwayes been dangerous. It's true, approved in points fundamental, such as that which Anastasius pressed, hath been most zealously opposed as hurtful, because thereby the soundation was strucken at, and errour in sundamental things got equal sooting with truth; But can ever this be said in such things as are supposed in the case laid down?

Laftly. The Reader may confider, if in sobernesse. and in an abstracted manner extra aftum difutationis. he were giving his advice to a Church fo divided, and immediatly thereafter to ftep in to judgment, he would not readily incline to commend union on these or fuch other terms, as necessary for the good of the Church, credit of the Ordinances, and the removing of flumbling-blocks from before the people, especials ly in the cases formerly mentioned; and if he might not have more peace to step to judgment after such an injustice, than if rigidly he should inhibit such condedescension. And we shall live the judicious, consciencious, and tender Reader, to answer these and in any fuch things to himself, and accordingly to do And if any, out of prejudice, (as we hope none will and heartily with none may) thall not confcienciously ponder the same, we leave him to consider that he must reckon to God therefore, and shall only obtest him that he will have more respect to the Churches peace, than to his own inclination; and that he will at least by some other lawful, possible and probable mean essay the removing, or at least the prevention of the growth of such divisions; and that he would with all conftruct well of the effayes of others, till we come all before the common Judge, who we are perfuad ed, loveth the Truth in peace, and hath joyned the together, which therefore ought by no man to be pe afunder.

Dayes are thele

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August, 19. 20.

September, 6. October, 16.

November, 6. 19.

December, 6. 7. 11. Believe them who pleafs

The Canicular, or Dog-dayes, begin alwayes upon 19 day of July, and endeth the 28 of August ; which sare denegrous to take fickness, let blood, or take men but if neteffity require, wast be done in the morning.

The Clymastericall Years of Men and Women, are, bry Seventh, Nynth, and Sixty-three Yeares.

versisement from the good Town of FRASERS-SURGH, concerning their Yearly Fairt, and week-

ly Mercats, throughout the whole Year. Which are as followeth,

The firft is S. Johns fair, the laft Fryday of lene. Second is Michael fair, the last the day of September, being a special good fair for all kind of Bestiall, and continuing for the space of three whole dayer.

Third is Midden fair the found Fryday of November. Fourth is Andersman fair the first tuesday of December

Alfo, a good Weekly Market every Fryday. low feeing this Loyal Burgh hath fent their Faits in fo good or ler, I hope other Towns allo will follow their good example.

Thus fare ye well, my Chapmen all, in Lands where ever ye be Who travells with thefe my Labours, for to bring money to me: For Chapmen they are honest Lads, and well below dofall; And those that are not kynde to them, ill-luck may them befall. For were it not by Chapmen, our Countrie would wanting be, Of many brave Commodicies, which are most pleasant to

Vulgar Notes and Observations, to know the Moon rifesh or feest, 1680.

I. At the Change, the rifeth and fearth wish the

2. At the beginning of her Inereale, the rileral after San-rifing, and freeh a little after San-fr

As her first quar. (vil. 3 or to days old) the rife about Mid-day, and fers about Adid-nicht.

4. At the Full Moon, the rifeth when the San I eth, and fererh when the San rifeth.

s. As the begining of her decreale, the rifeth a afeet San-ferring, and loss a listle after San-rife

6. As the last quarter of her decrease, the rifer bout Acid night, and fetenh about Acided Now by this you may easily know (near enough, for common ufe of Land-wen, but not fer Seamen) the in mediat times of the Moons vising and fering every flower by one bour, and about a fifth part, viz, 12 win

INUNDATIONS, 1680. Whole doth love his Lafe, his Lands, and Goods. Let bim beware of thate uyue furious Floods,

1. Saynce Marchias flood, February & Ziiii.

2. Our Ladies flood, March xxv.

2. A flood about the begining of May,

E. Sainet Martin the Fifther, his flood, Inly iv.

Marie Magdalen her Tears, or flood, Inly

6. Sainct Lawrence flood. August x.

Sand Lake's flood, Ottober zvili.

o. Saint Katharine her flood, Nevemb

He spring Seaton begins on Wednesday, As 10, making our dayes and nights equal.

To making our dayes and nights equal.

To making our dayes and nights equal.

In the layes are the nights thoughts thorrest.

Authorn, or Harveit Scalon, begins on Sanday

terrater, 12, the dayes and nights again equal.

Winter Seafon begins on Saterday, December a seaking the thorself day 8: longest night in the year.

The four Termly Quarters of this year 16861

The four Termly Quarter begins in Munday, Fobr.

2. salled Candlemos-doy, ending the last of April.

The ferend Quarter begins on Sasarday, May 1. the

Pulsar recken from May 3 called Rood-day, which

Descript enders the last day of July.

Third Duarter berins on Sanday, August t. called inbut-day and endeth the tast day of Octuber the fourth had less Termity Quarter begins on Mauday lovember t. which it caded Hallow-day, so that own tallow-Bran this Tear falls on Sundays negles before above for a remomber the sourch Commandment, S.C.) and spideth the tast of Lanuary each quarter being a manufic

Ind because we shall so no Estiple this lear is so. In our Pozison, either of Sond School, either of Sond School, either of Sond School, either of Sond School, and choic Aspects to sath other Pactons: as shall be hold them with carano rempilities. Lauders DR VM.

millary buying on Churchay, specifups and office 3. win, after 3. The fak, and being available to secondal of the barred from their beautifus to be faked in the barred from their beautifus from thei van Tuefdey 13 days segmin. paft 6 as mi Weinefagy 28 day, 47 min. paft Noon-tid rec days fair and cold, then to the a rainy and the from thence to the writt final differentians eweather from the are to the write final differenting differentiale winds, then to the axiv cold raw thowe and fferent good Winter weather, good for Fifthers. ten at Kilfyob's day, S. Naughlans at Old A enefal. Tanton fair at Louvronce kirk, and at Bethalnie 7 day, S. Mango in Glafgom 13 de inkall and Kilmining 21 day, S. Tanli fair at Ti chan the last inclday. idep beging on Dunbay, trip be rifeth 30 min. befone & felt 30 min. affer ie of food in any wife, to kery sheem with maifer boatel not \$1000, Bacept the wife with the dey:49 min.paft 1 afte day, 46 m. palt 3 after pain. paft 12 at ilo.paft z after die and unconfin

night night night night